

An investigation into the teaching practices and strategies  
that result in improved engagement in mainstream classrooms  
for year seven & eight Māori students in a decile five intermediate  
school.

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# Abstract

Despite high achievement by many Māori (indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand) students there is still a disparity between the achievements of Māori students and Non Māori students in the New Zealand educational context. Given that over 85% of Māori students are currently in mainstream settings rather than Māori medium settings the Government has initiated and supported teacher professional development approaches in efforts to enhance teacher effectiveness for teachers working with Māori in mainstream settings.

This investigation looks specifically at the practice of four teachers who have been on the Te Kauhua/Māori in Mainstream Pilot project in a decile<sup>1</sup> 5 Intermediate school in the South Island of New Zealand. An important aspect of this investigation is that it listens to and includes the voices and opinions of eight students who are in the classes of these teachers. Early on in the Te Kauhua project teachers at the school articulated that it was the lack of engagement from their Māori students that was the problem and they wanted to look at ways in which they could maximise Māori student engagement in the classroom learning contexts.

The particular aim of this investigation was to look at specific strategies and practices that teachers used to successfully maximise Māori student engagement in the classroom curriculum. The results highlighted the importance of the quality of the relationship between the teacher and the students, the positive impact of the extra effort that teachers applied to engage their students and the students' preferences for working in small groups. Underpinning these aspects of practice was the importance that teachers placed on developing their reflective practice and the participation in small learning professional learning groups.

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<sup>1</sup> The method used by the New Zealand Ministry of Education to rank schools 1 to 10 according to their demographic socio-economic communities. (10 represents more affluent communities and 1 represents lower socio-economic communities).

# Glossary of Terms

**Action Research.** An approach to improved education by encouraging teachers to be aware of and critical of their own practice, and act on ways to improve it by continuously evaluating and modifying their practice.

**Ako.** To learn, to teach. The reciprocity of a person being both a learner and a teacher.

**Aroha.** Love, respect, sympathy.

**Best practice.** Methods/systems that have been shown to achieve results.

**Decile.** The method used by the Ministry of Education to rank schools 1 to 10 according to their demographic socioeconomic communities.

**Hui.** A meeting, a gathering where certain rituals apply.

**Kaiahara.** Responsibility for overseeing research and education involving Māori people and culture.

**Karakia.** Prayer

**Kaumatua.** A respected elder.

**Kaupapa Māori.** Māori philosophy and principles.

**Kete.** Basket

**Koha.** Gift

**Kohanga reo.** Language nest, preschool teaching through the medium of Māori.

**Kotahitanga.** A collaborative response towards a commonly held goal, vision or purpose.

**Kura.** School

**Mainstream.** All children from all backgrounds are in the same class.

**Mana motuhake.** The development of personal or group identity and independence.

**Manaakitanga.** Hospitality and care for others.

**Māori.** Indigenous people of New Zealand.

**Mihimhi.** Greeting

**Ngā whakapiringatanga.** The careful organisation of specific individual roles and responsibilities required in order to achieve individual and group outcomes.

**Pākehā.** Non Māori of European descent.

**Pedagogical practice.** The specialised form of knowledge to understand how children learn, applied to teaching practice.

**Powhiri.** Ceremony of welcome.

**Pumanawatanga.** Morale, tone and heart of an organisation.

**Puna mahara.** Memory

**Rangatiratanga.** Related to effectiveness, being good at things and getting things done.

**Tapu.** Sacred

**Te Kauhua** The supports on a waka and used as a metaphor for supporting each other on a journey

**Te reo.** Language

**Tikanga Māori .** Cultural pattern, custom, obligations and conditions of the Māori people.

**Tuaparapara.** Chants

**Waiata.** Songs

**Waka.** Canoe

**Wānanga.** A Māori centre of learning and a learning forum which involves a rich and dynamic sharing of knowledge through dialogue and debate.

**Whakamā.** Shyness or embarrassment.

**Whanau.** Extended family. In this context it is used to describe people working co-operatively and collaboratively for a purpose.

**Whanaungatanga.** Relationships

**Whare.** A meeting house.

**Whakaiti.** Humility

**Wairua.** Spirituality

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

This investigation analyses and compares the opinions and experiences of eight Māori students and their teachers at a decile five intermediate school in the South Island of New Zealand in order to discover more about the types of teaching practices that maximise engagement and learning for Māori students. When the investigation began the students were randomly selected from four different year seven classes from within the school. The classes that they were selected from all had teachers who were actively involved in teacher learning as part of the first stage of the Te Kauhua Māori<sup>1</sup> in mainstream project at the school in 2007. The teachers were a mix of experienced and beginning teachers, ranging in experience from one year to 10 years. Of the teachers, two were female and two were male.

The gender mix of the students was five females and three males. As the selection was random it is difficult to make any assumptions about their abilities except to say that none of them had any special learning needs.

The research tracked the students through their first year at the intermediate school and into and through their final year. The interviews and the surveys of the students and the teachers were held in the second year of the students attending the intermediate. The reasoning for this was to ensure that both the teachers and the students had sufficient time to experience the action research projects that teachers were implementing as part of their iterative cycle of improving their practice for Māori students.

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Education initiative to assist schools in implementing professional development programmes that focus on productive partnerships between schools and Whānau in order to maximise learning opportunities for Māori students.

## **Context for the Study**

### **Achievement and Indigenous Peoples**

The issues surrounding the achievement of indigenous peoples in mainstream classrooms where curriculum continues to be structured within a framework of colonialism is of growing concern to educators (see, for example, Alton-Lee, 2003; Blair, cited in Majors, (ed.), 2001; Hirsch, 1990; Smith, 2003; Tuuta, Bradnam, Hynds, Higgins & Broughton, 2004). Although New Zealand is no longer a colony of the British Empire the policies and practices that are evident in our mainstream educational contexts have reflected and reinforced the social history of the European culture while excluding the epistemologies of the peoples (indigenous People of Aotearoa New Zealand) and their culture. This pattern of monoculturalism is evident in the Educational policies of many Western countries which have been developed from within the fabric of the dominant cultural ideology and favours students whose “cultural capital” (Bourdieu, 1997) matches that of the schools.

Comparing the literacy achievement of students of diverse backgrounds to that of students of mainstream backgrounds in the United States indicates that over a 20 year period, African American and Latina/o students are not learning to read and write as well as their European American peers (Au, 1998). More recent research relating to literacy and diverse students confirms that achievement levels of diverse students sits below national norms, (see, for example, Alton-Lee, 2003; Au, 2002; Fletcher, Parkhill & Fa’ofoi, 2005). Compensatory culturally appropriate practices which infer that the school is recognising the indigenous or diverse culture are ineffective and can in fact perpetuate the inequalities of domination of a majority group over another (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

## **The New Zealand Context**

In New Zealand the influences of the dominant European culture in the curriculum have had similar effects on Māori student achievement to those described in the United States research above. There has been a move from within Māori to focus on “freeing the indigenous mind from the grip of dominant hegemony” (Smith 2003, p.3). This move began in the 1980s and was led initially by a revitalization of the Māori Language (Te reo) and the creation of Māori immersion schooling, from pre school (Te Kohanga Reo) to tertiary institutions (Wānanga).

These schooling options provided Māori parents with an option to make a conscious effort to move outside the dominant culture system, namely European. In Kaupapa Māori (Māori Philosophy) educational settings, Māori cultural aspirations are assured, and in these situations of conscious awareness, many found a way to get momentum towards change (Smith, 2003). Twenty years later these schooling options still exist for Māori and are now a fully recognised and state funded schooling alternative (Bishop & Glynn, 1999).

## **Te Kauhua Māori in Mainstream Pilot Project**

Demographic trends in New Zealand have resulted in higher concentrations of the population in urban school districts (Statistics New Zealand, 2002) and the choice to attend Māori immersion schools may not be a viable economic option for many. Given that over 80% of Māori students are currently in mainstream classroom settings (Tuuta, et al, 2004) and that there is still disparity between Māori student achievement and that of non Māori students, the Ministry of Education has focused on ways to improve the educational outcomes of Māori student in mainstream settings. As part of Budget 2000, funding was secured from 2001 – 2003 to pilot “new and innovative approaches to professional development to enhance teacher effectiveness for teachers working with Māori in mainstream settings”

(Tuuta et al., 2004, p. vii). From the theoretical position of Kaupapa Māori, research pilot projects have been implemented in clusters of schools to discover more about appropriate learning contexts that will improve Māori student academic and social outcomes by facilitating professional development opportunities that will build teacher capability. The Te Kauhua Māori Mainstream Pilot project (Te Kauhua) is one of these projects and its framework provides the context for this study.

The theoretical concepts that underpin Te Kauhua are grounded in Māori Tikanga (indigenous ways of knowing and knowledge) but also encompass research evidence that infers that professional development needs to give teachers time to reflect on what is happening for Māori students. “This approach required an intervention in the way teachers think about their world, their cultural identity, curriculum and cultural practices in the classroom” (Tuuta et al., 2004, p.vii). There is also a growing body of evidence that highlights the importance of community involvement as an integral part of learning programmes and supports the development of wider and more effective pedagogical practices for diverse students (see, for example, Alton Lee, 2003; Bishop & Glynn, 1999).

Involvement of teachers in the Te Kauhua Project necessitates a repositioning of the power relations in the classroom so that the teacher does not have to be the owner and giver of all knowledge. The teacher’s role becomes one of creating contexts for learning; where students can co-construct the learning and the learning outcomes (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). The New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education (MOE), 2007) identifies the importance of co-constructed learning within the phrases, “Teacher as facilitator” and “shared learning” (MOE, 2007 p.34). These concepts about teaching and learning correlate to the Māori principle of “ako” (reciprocity) which acknowledges that one can be both a teacher and a learner. Reciprocity in teaching refers to situations where other people are part of the learning process and there is opportunity for teachers and students to learn from each other. This type of learning encourages in depth thinking and ensures that students are aware of the process of learning and

not just the product. Participation in reciprocal learning infers engagement in the process by placing the learner at the centre of the learning. Furthermore it uses continuous evaluation through self and peer reflection by the teacher and the learner (Boud and Feletti, 1997; Kaa, 1994).

## **The New Zealand Curriculum 2007**

With the focus of the revised New Zealand Curriculum (MOE, 2007) shifting from content coverage to the importance of developing coherent learning pathways for students, it seems feasible to enable teachers to reflect on how individual students learn, and adjust their teaching to meet these learning needs. In addition to this, children and young people are to be encouraged to take control of their own learning by reflecting on what they know, how they know it and what they need to learn next. These are closely aligned with the principles of teaching diverse students in mainstream settings and are highlighted in the Draft Māori Education Strategy 2008 - 2012, *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success* (MOE, 2007). The focus on effective pedagogy in New Zealand curriculum (MOE, 2007) includes elements of teaching practice that can be seen as fundamental to Māori Methodology in engaging learners in problem based learning, connecting with prior learning and learning across an integrated curriculum.

On page 34 of the New Zealand Curriculum (MOE, 2007) there is a useful section on effective pedagogy and some indicators to guide teacher actions towards utilising effective pedagogical practices. These indicators are:

- creating a supportive learning environment
- encouraging reflective thought and action
- enhancing the relevance of new learning
- facilitating shared learning
- making connections to prior learning and experience
- providing sufficient opportunities to learn
- inquire into the teaching-learning relationship

These indicators in conjunction with the Principles and Values that underpin the New Zealand Curriculum are in alignment with research and findings about what works best to bring about improved academic and social outcomes for diverse students.

This investigation draws from the seminal research of Adrienne Alton-Lee in the *Best Evidence Synthesis of Quality Teaching for Diverse Students in Schooling* (2003) and will refer to elements of this synthesis as well as The New Zealand Curriculum to highlight the research that has already taken place to guide policy and practice relating to quality teaching in New Zealand schools. The information gathered in this investigation will provide useful ideas, reflections and strategies that schools can use when implementing the changes in pedagogical practices that have been sign posted with the release of the revised New Zealand Curriculum (MOE, 2007) and also in wider empirical studies about what constitutes best practice for teaching diverse students.

## **Research Questions**

### **Main Question**

1. What are the teaching practices and strategies that maximise Māori student engagement in mainstream classrooms in a decile 5 intermediate school?

### **Supplementary Questions**

2. What are some of the influential factors that students recognise as helping them engage in their learning?
3. What strategies are teachers using to help students engage in learning?
4. What are the implications of these findings in relation to teacher practice?

# Chapter 2

## Literature Review

### Introduction

This review is comprised of two main sections. The first section focuses on the issues pertaining to student engagement, student motivation to learn, the factors that influence their learning and examines the research relating to what is considered best practice for diverse learners. The term diversity can be unpacked across many dimensions to include differences in skill level, prior learning experiences and influences of gender, family and culture (Alton-Lee, 2007). In this investigation *diverse* refers to the indigenous Māori students of Aotearoa New Zealand and the influences that their culture and heritage brings to the classroom. These influences which are integral to the identity of the learner have not been able to intersect appropriately within the traditional mainstream learning contexts and consequently Māori students have not been well served by the Pākehā dominated curriculum. Because of the intrinsic relationship between teaching and learning it is also important to look at what constitutes effective professional development for teachers. This investigation focuses specifically on the engagement of Māori students so it is important to look at the literature underpinning Māori pedagogy and Kaupapa Māori. The second section begins by looking at some of the formal mid range theories that relate to educational issues and then moves into the theoretical approaches relating to research methodologies and matters pertaining to qualitative research.

## **Student Engagement**

Improving student engagement relates directly to student achievement (Bruner, 1996). It is important therefore to focus on the meaning of “engaged” and “achievement” in terms of Māori pedagogy in the context of this study. Achievement in Māori terms is whānau based and holistic, and although individual achievement is recognised, the success of the group is also valued. Māori achievement is also seen in terms of knowledge of being Māori and of pride in that identity (Tuuta et al., 2004). In Kura Kaupapa Māori the collective vision and philosophy (Kaupapa) of the charter provides guidelines for what constitutes excellence in Māori education. The fundamental ideas of education being able to connect with Māori politically, socially, economically and spiritually (Smith, 1992) are underpinned by the desire for Māori students to be provided with the skills and understandings to enable them to participate fully now and in the future. In a study of culturally relevant pedagogies; academic success, cultural competence and critical consciousness were the indicators most aspired to by parents and students (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Student engagement refers to the “connection and commitment students have to school and learning” (New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) 2008, p.1). In official Ministry terms “achievement” relates to achievement in the essential learning areas but also takes as its starting point the vision that sees all young people achieving as “life long learners who are confident creative, connected and actively involved” (MOE, 2007, p.4). This is broad enough to encompass outcomes such as knowledge of being Māori, strength and pride in Māori identity as well as intellectual growth (Hirsch, 1990). Students cannot achieve these things as passive recipients in a knowledge-out-of-context classroom (Applebee, 1996) so it is important to ensure that all students are able to participate as members of the learning community and are “involved in the process of educating one another” (Bruner, 1996, p. 82). Evidence tells us that students learn best when they are engaged in this these types (students being active participants in the learning as opposed to being passive recipients) of



learning situations (Biddulph & Osborne, 1984; Brophy, 2001; Palinscar & Brown, 1984). Successful classroom participation will hopefully result in improved student engagement, which is a necessary condition for improving student achievement (Bruner, 1996; Good & Brophy, 2000; Tharp & Gallimore, 1998). However, intangible outcomes such as personal satisfaction, personal growth and recognition of efforts by others are also part of what it means to be achieve (Hemera, 2000).

## **Motivation to Learn**

Students' own opinion of their ability and the usefulness of the subject are powerful motivators to learn (or not to learn). Most of the beliefs that students have about their learning are a result of direct learning experiences, successes and failures and the input or opinions of teachers and parents about aspects of their learning. For example, if a student hears his father make a comment about the usefulness of mathematics as subject as compared to poetry then this may encourage him to apply himself and persevere in mathematics, and/or it may also give him a negative attitude towards poetry (Boekaerts, 2000). The value of the subject and the tasks need to be intrinsically motivating for the student. In a classroom where the tasks are not related to authentic learning contexts or are not able culturally appropriate or meaningful for students then there will be little, or no motivation to learn. Teachers therefore must know their students well enough to find out what their beliefs are about learning because once these beliefs are formed they are very resistant to change. (Good & Brophy, 2000).

Students are not motivated to learn in the face of failure partly because negative thoughts about ability in a subject become part of the student's theory of self and will impede the learning process. Research by Ziegert, Kistner, Castro, & Robertson, (2001) show that children as young as five or six often feel helpless in response to achievement based situations and this

becomes a motivational pattern for learning in the future. An example of this from my own learning was my opinion of my mathematic ability. I was in standard 4 (year 6) when a new way of approaching the teaching of Mathematics was introduced into New Zealand classrooms. Modern School Mathematics (MSM) meant that teachers had to teach mathematics in different ways than the usual set algorithms and rote learning that was previously required. I am guessing that they weren't provided with any professional development to assist this change in pedagogy because from my experiences the teachers weren't very skilled in doing this. I had achieved well enough with the old mathematics syllabus but I wasn't able to grasp and understand the methods or the language in the new system, and so began my lack of motivation to learn in mathematics. Any task that necessitated "the new maths" filled me with dread and self-doubt. By the time I left primary school I disliked mathematics intensely because I had negative feelings about the subject and my lack of ability to be able to achieve in it. I still perceive myself as not very good at mathematics and yet I have managed to teach it successfully or have enabled my students to learn the strategies involved in understanding complex problems that are part of the year 8 mathematics curriculum.

The above example highlights one of the most important principles in addressing student motivation; the teacher must be able create learning situations that enable the student to re-establish a link between learning and positive outcomes (Boekaerts, 2000). Therefore in order to ensure that students are motivated to learn the teacher needs to establish and encourage representation of the diversities of the classroom in the curriculum of learning and then ensure that each child is travelling along a coherent pathway of personalised learning. The principles in the New Zealand curriculum (MOE, 2007) underpin this approach to teaching and learning.

## Effective Teaching

When reading the research and evidence about effective teaching (see, for example, Brophy, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Hattie, 2009; Robinson, Timperley & Bullard, 2000) the indicators are widely spread. I struggled to differentiate between the characteristics of effective teaching and the characteristics of effective teaching for diverse students. As I am citing Alton-Lee's (2003) work to support my arguments for best practice for diverse students in the next section of this dissertation, I will use this section on effective teaching to elucidate briefly the basic beliefs regarding teacher effectiveness for all students.

It is generally agreed that it is teachers that make the biggest difference to student achievement (Alton-Lee, 2003; Hattie, 2003, 2009). Hattie defines this further by saying that it is what teachers know, do and care about that accounts for a 30% variance in effective teaching for students (Hattie, 2003). So what is it that effective teachers know, do and care about that makes this difference for students?

The current mantra is that *teachers make a difference*...like most simple solutions this is not quite right – it is some teachers undertaking certain teaching acts with appropriately challenging curricula and showing students how to *think* or *strategize* about the curricula. Not all teachers are effective, not all teachers are experts and not all teachers have powerful effects on students. (Hattie, 2009, p.34)

It would seem obvious that effective teachers need to have a deep knowledge of the subjects that they teach and the process in which they should teach them. “The research has shown that there is dynamic interaction between teachers’ knowledge of the discipline and their knowledge of pedagogy”. (Codd, Brown, Clark, McPherson, O’Neill, O’Neill, et al., 2001, cited in Alton-Lee, 2003, p.10).

Although previous assumptions about teacher knowledge of subject matter knowledge and how best to teach it (pedagogical content knowledge) implies that both are important aspects of effective teaching. Hattie's (2009) recent research of over 800 meta analyses relating to achievement has found little evidence to support the assumption that teachers' content knowledge positively influences student achievement. Darling-Hammond (2006) has argued that subject matter knowledge is important for basic competence in teaching but doesn't necessarily matter from then on. These findings are already being debated in educational circles but it is important to reflect on these recent findings so that we can better understand how teachers with lesser subject and or pedagogical content knowledge can and have had positive affects on their students.

In my experience in supporting beginning teachers in their classroom teaching I have found that teachers who are aware of the sequence of the subject content and who know when to intervene to scaffold a student's learning are influential in their impact on student learning. Some of these teachers had only basic knowledge of the subject and were still developing their grasp of pedagogical content knowledge but were adept at co-constructing knowledge with the student. These successful teaching and learning experiences then enabled the teachers to reflect on the strategies they used and this in turn deepened their knowledge and understanding of pedagogy. What the research does clearly define is that effective teachers use pedagogical content knowledge to enable them to understand the needs of their students at a deep level, to allow flexible teaching responses to suit the needs of the learner and to provide appropriate learning tasks that will engage them in learning (Hattie, 2009).

There are a wide variety of investigations and research studies that highlight the importance of the relationship between the teacher and the student as being an integral aspect of effective teaching (see, for example, Alton-Lee, 2003; Bishop, 2003; Cornelius-White, 2007; Rubie-Davies, Hattie, &

Hamilton, 2006). This may provide some understanding of how teachers with lesser subject knowledge can still have positive effects on outcomes for students. Having teachers who care about the student above all else and are influential in their teaching and learning to do with the student will provide a productive classroom climate that feature “an ethic of caring that pervades teacher/student and student/teacher interactions” (Brophy, 2000, p.8).

## **Teaching Diverse Students**

As previously mentioned in the introduction, the term *diverse* in this investigation refers to the cultural diversity of students that exists within classrooms. The context for my study is looking specifically at teaching practices that will benefit Māori students, although it is my belief that what is good teaching practice for Māori students is likely to be good for all students. However, for the purpose of my investigation these ideas are discussed in order to show what effective teaching looks like for Māori students.

There are many examples of research within the gamut of theories regarding best practice for teaching diverse students that highlight the gap between school achievement of students of diverse backgrounds and those of mainstream backgrounds (see for example, Au, 1998; Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai, & Richardson, 2003; Flockton & Crooks, 2003, 2005, 2006; Phillips, McNaughton, MacDonald, 2001; Tuuta, et al., 2004). Darling-Hammond (1997) concludes from her research that learning is supported for diverse groups of students when the teacher plans and supports opportunities for collaborative learning in a caring environment. Recent research and ongoing studies and publications have stressed the importance of creating effective learning relationships between Māori students and their teachers. For example, in the book *Culture Speaks* Bishop & Berryman draw conclusions from the narratives that have taken place between the researchers of Te Kotahitanga ( a research based initiative to raise Māori

student achievement in years 9-13 contexts) and Māori high school students. In these narratives students identify the type of interactions in classrooms that create effective learning relationships in day to day classrooms. Briefly, teachers who were effective displayed care for their Māori students, had high expectations for Māori students and also promoted student learning (Bishop et al., 2006).

In the Executive Summary of *Te Kotahitanga Phase 3*, Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh & Teddy (2007) stress the importance of changing teacher practice and beliefs so that they reject any deficit beliefs about Māori students' educational levels and actively take professional responsibility for the learning of their students. "Diversity must be addressed rather than transcended" (Freedman & Daiute, 2001, p.86). This is a key pedagogical strategy where effective teaching is built upon the language practices of diverse students. Honouring the diversity of students is central to quality teaching (Brophy, 2001). Furthermore if students of diverse backgrounds are to be empowered then schools must increase their ability to incorporate the language of the diverse students in the school curriculum, involve community members in the school programme, enable students of diverse backgrounds to use language to construct their own knowledge and to advocate for these students in assessment practices (Cummins, 1986).

Mc Dermott & Gospodinoff (1981), argue that school systems, teachers, communities, students and families are all collectively responsible for the success or failure of students. Both Cummins's and Mc Dermott & Gospodinoff's viewpoints sit well within the spectrum of a constructivist perspective, but it is important to reflect on the possibility that these views are not those of the diverse or under represented research groups but those from the mainstream constructivist orientation. Au (1998) argues the need to move from a mainstream to a diverse constructivist orientation when researching ways to minimise literacy achievement gaps between diverse students and students of mainstream backgrounds.

## **Teacher Expectations**

The impact of teacher expectations, which are not only informed by their knowledge of the students and their expected progress in learning areas, but also by their intrinsic personal beliefs and values (MOE, 2006) have a substantial influence on the achievement of diverse students. Deficit theorising by teachers is regarded as a major barrier to Māori student academic achievement (Bishop, et al., 2003). Research evidence shows that New Zealand teachers not only have inappropriately low expectations for Māori students but they also make inappropriate assessments of their abilities (Millward, et al., 2001). Although important, teacher expectations also need to be supported with effective teaching (Alton-Lee, 2003). It is important then that teachers know about and trial approaches that will facilitate learning for diverse students. Te Kahurangi in schools is a catalyst for teachers to become involved in an iterative approach to action research which focuses on specific teaching strategies to maximise outcomes for Māori students. In this way teachers are using appropriate and manageable practices which are aligned with high expectations to sustain higher academic outcomes for Māori students.

## **Best Evidence Synthesis**

In the Executive Summary of *Quality Teaching for Diverse Students in Schooling: Best Evidence Synthesis* (2003), Alton-Lee highlights the importance of quality teaching as a key influence on high quality outcomes for diverse students. The challenge that is uncovered in this synthesis of research is aligned the expectations of the New Zealand curriculum (MOE, 2007). It is for teachers to “manage simultaneously the complexity of learning needs of diverse students” (Alton-Lee, p.v. 2003). Alton-Lee (2003) provides educators with ten research-based characteristics that can be used as principles to apply to teaching practice in order to maximise

outcomes for learners.

Briefly these are;

1. Quality teaching is focused on student achievement (including social outcomes)
2. Pedagogical practices enable classes to work as caring, inclusive and cohesive learning communities
3. Effective links are created between school and other cultural contexts
4. Teaching is responsive to student learning process
5. Opportunity to learn is effective and sufficient
6. Multiple task contexts support learning cycles
7. Curriculum goals, resources, task design and teaching are effectively aligned
8. Pedagogy scaffolds and provides appropriate feedback on students' task engagement
9. Pedagogy promotes thoughtful learning orientation, student self regulation, metacognitive strategies and student discourse
10. Teachers and students engage constructively in goal–orientated assessment.

It is encouraging to know that there has been such a recent wide scoping and in depth research focused on evidence of improved student outcomes which locates research in New Zealand within an international context.

## **Māori Pedagogy**



Māori pedagogy can be defined as the process by which knowledge, attitudes or skills are deliberately conveyed. Learning is imbedded in the life of the community and takes place within the context of daily living (Glynn, 1998; Metge, 1983). In whatever context it occurs, it includes the total instructional process from planning to implementation to evaluation and feedback (Millar & Findlay, cited in Hemera 2000). The following paragraphs provide a brief explanation of the key concepts that are integrated within Māori pedagogy.

### **Ako**

The term ako literally means to teach and to learn. Co-operative and collective learning are practised (Smith, 1995). The education process is seen as both student and teacher centred and the result is a unified co-operation of learner and teacher in a single enterprise (Metge, 1983). The roles of teacher and student that have been traditionally clearly defined in the mainstream classrooms of New Zealand schools are only recently beginning to change to adopt and value of this principle of “ako” in classroom teaching and learning contexts. The New Zealand Curriculum (MOE, 2007) highlights this type of learning under the heading of *Effective Pedagogy*, “In such a community, everyone, including the teacher, is a learner; learning conversations and learning partnerships are encouraged” (MOE, 2007, p.34).

### **Group learning**

The importance of contributing to the group reflects the everyday interaction in the whānau process. Whānau is the building block of traditional Māori society and encompasses the cultural aspirations and practices that are connected to identity and commitment (Tuuta et al., 2004). Whānau in this context refers to the formation of a group of people to address common goals, whose members may have come from a variety of different areas but now live in the same locality, and contribute to the physical and social wellbeing of the group as much as they do the tasks that

are set (Glynn, 1998). This preference for learning in group contexts works not only in terms of interaction between learners but also enables a strategy for including new learners into pre-existing groups where they can begin to learn from the wide range of expertise that already exists within the group (Metge, 1983). A good example of this is cited in Glynn (1998)... “Kapa Haka groups rarely start off anew, but successfully place new learners among experienced members. New learners progress through mastery of more advanced tasks, including the teaching of further new members” (Glynn, 1998 p.6). The hui is another group context where participants work together to discuss and assess ideas, solve problems and develop new initiatives. This wider focus on group learning also encapsulates the idea of facilitating shared learning where conversations with peers, family and the wider whānau include intergenerational learning and responsive learning. From this perspective it is clear that group learning in Māori pedagogy is more than having students involved in group work in classrooms for example; co-operative learning. Hohepa, McNaughton & Jenkins (1996) study of interaction patterns in Kohanga reo point out is not simply a matter of group versus individual, but rather the role of interactions within a group in relation to each other that are significant. Group learning within Māori methodology is about the group within the cultural context which helps students make sense of the learning interactions and allows them to bring their own “sense making processes” (Bishop & Glynn, 1999, p.158) into the learning.

### **Story Telling**

Story telling is a culturally appropriate way for information to be transmitted. It is important to realise that the telling of a story is a means not only to reveal links between the past and the present but also because it provides an opportunity for learner-initiated interaction with a skilled person (often from a different generation) where there is an enduring positive relationship of care and reciprocity. From a Pākehā viewpoint stories are widely accepted as an educational tool, e.g.; the teacher reads or tells the story. This is often done as an introduction to set the scene and to motivate

the learners to think about the learning context that the teacher has chosen. In this instance the adult has the control over the content and the process of telling the story (Lauritzen & Jaeger, 1997). In Māori pedagogy the story is an opportunity for the child or the learner to initiate discussion, learn new skills and to understand the deeper aspects of cultural and spiritual knowledge, that surround those skills. Story telling in this instance is also about bonding and enjoyment and learning from the story is explicit (Glynn, 1998). The stories are complex in nature (Glynn & Bishop, 1995) as they tell the child about their history, their ancestors, and the setting (land, water and sky) in which the events happened.

Carol Lauritzen and Michael Jaeger (1997) give an example of how narratives or story telling can be used to co-construct learning with children. Their account clearly shows how all the children (irrespective of cultural, academic or social diversity) were empowered to participate, question and negotiate together with their teacher new ways of learning. There are many similarities between this inclusive type of co-constructed learning and the points that the New Zealand curriculum (MOE, 2007) regards as effective pedagogy and teacher actions (p.34) to promote student learning, for example: encouraging reflective thought and action, making connections to prior learning, inquiring into the teaching-learning relationship and facilitating shared learning.

### **Memory and Rote Learning**

As part of the story telling there may be opportunity for both adult and child to learn and remember important aspects of the knowledge and the cultural practices that protect them. In this context memory and rote learning is a valued aspect of Māori pedagogy. The importance of rote learning is that it is not associated with trivial content but it is used to ensure that certain knowledge is mastered correctly and that it remains accurate in the memory (puna mahara). This learning of songs, (waiata) prayers (karakia) and chants (tuaparapara) is an aspect of this learning but other more complex

information is learnt so that a deeper understanding of what is learnt by rote can be elaborated on as the learner develops in cognitively culturally and spiritually through their lifetime.

## **Professional Development**

The commissioning of research by the Ministry of Education into the *Best Evidence Synthesis* series is indicative of a trend towards focusing on teachers and teaching to inform policy and practice in New Zealand.

In the 2007 publication of *Teacher Professional Learning and Development: Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration* (Timperley et al., 2007) provides an overview of contexts that impacted on a range of student outcomes. The study sought to determine how teachers respond to their professional development and how this leads to positive outcomes for students. “Teacher professional learning does not occur in a vacuum but in the social context of practice” (Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, & Fung, 2007, p. xlv). The importance of the findings highlighted that when teachers engage in professional development programmes ideally they should be engaging with new ideas and practices, but to be effective this needs to be more than just the brief encounter that happens so often in a one day workshop or an afternoon lecture. To expect that teachers will implement ideas, principles and practices that are essentially the ideas of others is not ideal and will not lead to long term changes in practice or increased outcomes for students (Timperley et al., 2007).

Typically the scenario of professional development in schools has been to support an initiative (whether school based or a Ministry directive) by allowing, (which usually means purchasing), resources and professional development and whatever other forms of assistance are required to ensure implementation. From here the support dissipates as does the implementation or alternatively the implementation dissipates and the need for external support is withdrawn (Coburn, 2003). From a personal and

professional viewpoint I can identify with the emotional journey of such initiatives. As educators we are interested in students' achievement and will willingly give anything a try that may increase the outcomes for students. However as a school leader I am continually troubled by the waste of time and financial resources that go into teacher professional development which can leave teachers feeling disillusioned and frustrated because the framework that supports the ideas (which can be very worthwhile) doesn't support sustainability in everyday practice. The issue of sustainability is raised by Century and Levy (2002) when they question, "How do we ensure that the programmes we are implementing will last? (cited in Timperley et al., 2007 p. 218). This issue is worthy of further consideration by educators when planning the content and structure of teacher professional development.

Seven elements of professional learning are listed and discussed in depth throughout the findings from *Best Evidence Synthesis on Teacher Professional Learning and Development* ( Timperley et al., 2007). This synthesis consolidated International and New Zealand evidence about how to best promote professional development as teacher learning that will have positive outcomes for students if practised in New Zealand classrooms. These were;

1. extended time for learning
2. external expertise
3. teachers' engagement in learning
4. prevailing discourses challenged
5. opportunities to participate in a professional learning community of practice
6. consistency with wider trends in policy research
7. active school leadership.

It is important to note that not all quality teacher learning needs to contain these seven elements nor does the inclusion of these elements ensure successful teacher learning, but they do provide a framework of favourable

contexts for effective teacher learning. For the purposes of my investigation which takes place within the parameters of the Te Kauhua professional development model, I have listed them to highlight the alignment of similar elements in the Te Kauhua model.

The goal of the Te Kauhua professional development model is consistent with wider trends in policy and research firstly because it applies resources and time to enable the objectives of the National Achievement Guidelines (NAG) 1.(v) to be supported in schools. The Te Kauhua model provides teachers in the school with the support of an effective teacher seconded over two and a half years who has the skills understanding and knowledge (culturally and professionally) to mentor and challenge teachers to look at ways to change/modify and improve their practice to maximise achievement opportunities for Māori students. This two and a half year time frame is substantive and enables teachers to be involved in authentic and meaningful learning about pedagogy and also allows time for them to implement their action research over an extended time. Both of these aspects are key elements in professional development programmes that promote positive student outcomes (Boshuizen, Broome, & Gruber, 2004, cited in Timperley et al., 2007; Cobb, McClain, Lamberg & Dean, 2003).

An important aspect of this model is that it gives teachers a safe process to reflect on their practice within professional learning communities that focus on teacher positioning within discourse (Foucault, 1972). This means that although teachers did not create the existing deficit theories about Māori student achievement, they may instinctively draw on some of these discussions or discourses to make sense of what they see happening in classrooms. It is important then to provide teachers with opportunities to evaluate where they position themselves in the discourse. Continuing these types of discussions with other teachers in ways that are non-threatening enables teachers to explore and discover that there are other ways to think about Māori student achievement. Looking for solutions instead of problems is part of the learning that takes place for teachers when they discursively

reposition themselves” (Davies cited in Timperley et al., 2007, p.xviii). This is what the Timperley et al. (2007) refer to as “challenging prevailing discourses” (p. xxvii) and is another example of the Te Kauhua professional development model being aligned with best practice. It is often through these types of discussions that focus on beliefs and practice that teachers develop collaboration and collegiality. “There is no one way to accomplish this ethic of collaboration. It often starts with a few teachers who decide to do something together. There are many entry points for teachers to become colleagues” (Lieberman & Millar, 1999, p. 65).

Developing collegiality underpins the importance of forming relationships with all stakeholders involved in Te Kauhua (non-Māori & Māori teachers, Māori parents, caregivers and whānau and Māori students). It is within these relationships that Te Kauhua provides opportunities for teachers to “participate in a professional community of practice” (Timperley et al., 2007, p.xxvii). The teachers involved in this study are working within a teacher inquiry and knowledge building cycle that is based on Lewin’s (cited in McNiff, 1998) cyclic model of action research. Te Kauhua means the supports on a waka, (canoe) and is used as a metaphor for supporting each other on the same journey. This aspect of working together and supporting each other encourages and expects schools to work in partnership with their Māori community, and to work more effectively with Māori whānau.

## **Sociocultural and Social Constructivist Theories**

The literature that I have reviewed to support my investigation exist and transpire from within a range of formal theories that are commonly used when discussing concepts and ideas relating to educational issues and teaching and learning. These theories are statements about how things are connected (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). The nature of this dissertation will revolve around analysing and interpreting qualitative data as it relates to the

way students are able to and prefer to learn and so the theories that I will use as a framework for analysis are primarily mid-range theories which according to Mutch, are those that are often used to “analyse and interpret data” and or used to “explain findings” (Mutch, 2000. p.62). Mid-range theories, as the term suggests, lie between the extremes of Macro-level theories such as Marxism, and the Micro-level theories which deal with specific situations that are more like testable propositions. Mid-range theories sit between these two extremes and use a set of concepts to define and describe possible explanations. For example, I will be analysing my data through the concepts of social and cultural interaction as they relate to socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky, 1987). In attempting to explain the importance of the influences of culture in the way a child learns I will look specifically at Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological model, which is a human development theory. Both Vygotsky’s and Bronfenbrenner’s theories are considered as formal mid-range theories. “Formal” relates to the fact that they are based on a broad conceptual area (teaching and learning). Mid-range theories are often are often referred to and used in everyday discussions in early childhood centres and schools.

Socio-cultural theory highlights the importance of social cultural and historical factors in the lives of human beings (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 2003; Tracey & Morrow, 2006). These theories are permeated by closely aligned constructivist theories about learning. Constructivist theories focus on the lived experience and the perceptions, feelings and understandings of the people in these experiences (Schwandt, 1994). A transformation of the constructivist viewpoint to the social constructivist viewpoint moves from being centred on the personal subjective nature of knowledge construction to more of a focus on its social intersubjective nature (Mehan, 1981, cited in Au, 1998). Social constructivists are interested in the construction of knowledge through the social group. This perspective is especially relevant when considering sociocultural learning, cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1997) and diverse learners. The concept of “cultural capital” encompasses the idea that students’ academic



achievements are shaped by the social and cultural resources of both the family and the school (Bourdieu & Passerson, 1977). To ensure that students are given the best possible chance to succeed in their learning it is essential that curriculum in the classroom and the teaching methods reflect the values and standards of the students' home cultures (Au, 2002).

Vygotsky (1987) appears to have been the most influential theorist in terms of research about learning from the social constructivist perspective. According to Vygotsky, internalisation of higher mental functions in learning involves the transfer from socially supported (interpsychological) to individually (intrapsychological) controlled performance.

(This) makes sense of learning in different cultural contexts since cultures hold such different beliefs about the nature of learning. Children acquire their thinking skills through the discourse of interaction within different social and cultural groups. (Smith, 1998, p.240).

Werstch (1985) argues that sociocultural theory overlooks developmental processes that are not primarily social. For example, Vygotsky neglected the importance of biological maturation in a child's development. Rogoff (1990) notes that Vygotsky did not recognise how much learners affect their own development by choosing what they do and do not want to do and whom they will do it with. However one of the most widely accepted theories about the way children learn is encapsulated in Vygotsky's (1978) ideas around the importance of guided participation by social interaction with "tutor" (a parent, a teacher, or a more skilled peer). The role of the tutor is to support, guide and share some of the cognitive workload with the learner. Wood, Bruner & Ross (1976) use the term "scaffolding," in an effort to describe one of the pedagogical strategies necessary to address the implications of Vygotsky's theory of learning. Effective scaffolding includes joint problem solving, intersubjectivity – a process of arriving at shared understanding, and structuring the task in order to present an appropriate challenge to the learner, which Vygotsky termed working within

the “zone of proximal development” (Vygotsky, 1978). The focus is on the importance of the role of teachers, peers and family members in mediating learning. It highlights the “dynamics of classroom instruction and the organisation of the systems within which children learn or fail to learn” (Moll, 1990, cited in Au, 1998, p.300).

The social constructivist approach to learning can be seen as closely aligned to problem based active methodology, which is embedded in Māori pedagogy (Hemera, 2000). From a teaching perspective I find the interconnectedness of traditional and new approaches to be both stimulating and reassuring. It is through this special amalgam of Manaakitanga (care for students above all else) and sound pedagogical practice that this investigation searches for new ways of knowing about Māori students and their preferences for learning in mainstream classrooms.

Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model (1979) views the child (or the learner in the context of this investigation) as the centre of a series of concentric systems; micro-systems, meso-systems, exo-systems and macro-systems all of which are inter related and impact on the child’s development. The importance of this model in the context of this study is that it takes all of these layers that make up the child’s environment into account and considers them all as important influences in the development of the child. Examples of these influences within their concentric systems are: the ontogenic system which relates to the child’s character and abilities (Berryman, Walker, Reweti, O’Brien, & Weiss, 2000); the micro-system which is the child’s immediate environment including their family and community; the meso-system which are the social institutions the child belongs to eg: school and sports clubs; the exo-system which relates to the systems in society eg: health, law enforcement and education and the final concentric layer which is the macro-system that includes the values, beliefs and the attitudes of the culture to which the child belongs. This model is easily aligned to Māori academic literature and research as it focuses on the

importance of relationships in ways that are culturally appropriate to the child. (Berryman et al., 2000)

## **Kaupapa Māori**

Kaupapa Māori is a discourse of proactive theory and practice that had developed into a political consciousness by the late 1980s. It promoted the renaissance of Māori cultural aspirations and practices as a philosophical and productive educational stance. The Kaupapa Māori pedagogical framework advocates that good teaching should promote core values, be holistic, innovative and intergenerational (Airini, 1998, cited in Tuuta et al., 2004). “The core values of manaakitanga, aroha, powhiri, mihimhi and whakaiti are taken for granted” (Tuuta et al., 2004 p.14). The collective vision and philosophy of Kaupapa provides guidelines for incorporating these core values in order to connect Māori education with “Māori aspirations politically, socially, economically and spiritually (Smith, 1992, p. 23).

Kotahitanga and Te Kauhua are both examples of research based professional development projects from the theoretical position of Kaupapa Māori. The main aim of both projects is to investigate how to improve the educational achievement of Māori students in mainstream school classrooms (Bishop, et al, 2003). The approach of Kotahitanga authorises the student perspective (Cook-Sather, 2002) by involving students in discussions about their education as part of the process of collaborative storytelling (Bishop, 1996). In these discussions or narratives, students identified the type of interactions in classrooms that created or hindered effective learning relationships in day to day classrooms. This input from the students formed the basis of what is termed the “effective teaching profile” (ETP). This became the framework that is used to support teachers to become effective teachers of Māori students. Similarly the key feature of

Te Kauhua is that the professional development of teachers is focussed on creating of professional learning communities that are centred around inquiry based teaching to bring about best practice to maximise Māori student achievement (Gorinski, Shortland-Nuku, 2006; Tuuta, et al., 2004). The overarching precept of both Kotahitanga and Te Kauhua is the need for effective teaching and family-school partnerships, where whānau are appropriately included to enable teachers to create a culturally appropriate and responsive context for learning. The two main understandings that teachers must be able to demonstrate are that they;

1. Reject deficit theorising as a way of explaining or justifying Māori students; achievement levels.
2. They are professionally committed to bring about change in Māori students' educational achievement by focusing on their own practice and pedagogical knowledge through the appropriate professional development and their own reflective practice.

In the book *Culture Speaks*, Bishop & Berryman (2006) expand on the conclusions from the narratives that have taken place in interviews with researchers and Māori high school students. Inclusive of the importance of relationships and interactions Bishop & Berryman describe (below) the six types of relationships and interactions that need to be observed within the ETP and in terms of Māori understandings.

### **Manaakitanga**

The importance of teachers demonstrating care for Māori students, as Māori on a daily basis. Māori see and interact with the world in different ways as the cultural understandings and experiences they have are different from the cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1997; Smith 1997) of the mainstream classroom. It is important that teachers on a daily basis “care for the students as culturally located individuals” (Bishop et al., 2007 p.1) and create learning

interactions that recognise their differences.

### **Mana motuhake**

Teachers need to have high expectations for their Māori students and to care about their performance and achievements. Mana motuhake involves teachers caring for the performance of their students and enabling them to participate fully as individuals and as a group at a local or global level.

### **Nga whakapiringatanga**

Teachers have the responsibility to create well managed learning environments. This involves more than just setting boundaries and rules. Curriculum knowledge and content planning need to be evident in the way the teacher can respond to the learning that is developing in the classroom. When teachers utilise their pedagogical knowledge and fulfil their specific planning and organisational responsibilities they are ensuring better outcomes for the group.

### **Wānanga**

Teachers need to be able to interact with their Māori students as Māori in ways that will provide them with useful feedback and feed forward. They also need to look at existing classroom practices (positioning, strategies and spatial organization) to improve opportunities for the sharing of knowledge and ideas between pupils and between pupils and teachers to allow the creation of new knowledge.

### **Ako**

This concept has been mentioned previously in the section on Māori pedagogy but is important to note that the concept of students and teachers learning from each other is also now encouraged in the New Zealand curriculum (MOE, 2007) where reciprocal teaching is valued as an important aspect of teaching and learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Teachers

therefore need to be conscious of using strategies that promote effective teaching and learning interactions with their students.

### **Kotahitanga**

Students need to know the purpose and sequence of their learning so that they can individually and collaboratively reflect on and monitor their progress. This belief is basic to the understanding of personalised learning pathways, which encourages all students to reflect on their learning and plan to next step towards further achievement. Teachers therefore need to know their students' strengths and needs and work with them where they are at in their learning processes and move students towards ongoing achievement.

The implied parallels to the Revised New Zealand Curriculum 2007 in the above list are my own, but it is important for me to qualify that these indicators existed first in Māori pedagogy and have only just been identified as accepted and desirable aspects of pedagogy in national documentation and educational policy and practice over the last 10 years. There are many other aspects of Māori pedagogy that are now evident with different labels in modern documents about teaching and learning eg: co-construction of learning, the key competencies underpinning all learning, formative assessment and learning communities to name a few. It would be interesting to further research these and other Māori pedagogical practices and the way that they relate to student driven, personalised learning contexts in the light of what is now considered effective pedagogy. However these ideas would be better understood and need to be investigated more deeply from a different research perspective and so at the moment I leave the reader to think about these implications for themselves.

# **Chapter 3**

## **Methodological Approaches and Theories**

### **Qualitative Research**

Qualitative research is concerned with what people are experiencing and how they interpret their experiences (Psathas, 1973, cited in Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). The qualitative researcher is involved in studying a social setting to “understand the meaning of the participant’s lives in the participant’s own terms” (Janesick, 2000, p.51). Eisner (1991) argues that qualitative inquiry is involved with sets of principles, critical reflections and expressions that allow complexities to be examined. In qualitative inquiry the researcher creates opportunities for the voice of the participant to be heard. Bogdan and Biklen, (1998) use the term qualitative research to encompass research strategies which collect rich descriptive data about and of people, places and conversations. This type of data is not easily represented statistically and needs considered inductive analysis to categorise themes and patterns from the data collected. Inductive research and analysis involves a collection of data followed by analysis of that data in order to develop a theory, model or explanation (Gratton & Jones, 2004). According to Bogden and Biklen (1998), there are five main features of qualitative research:

1. Qualitative research is naturalistic as the direct source of the data comes from within the everyday setting or context of the participants’ lives.
2. Qualitative research is descriptive as the data takes the form of words or pictures rather than numbers, and every detail is considered important.
3. Qualitative research is concerned with the process rather than just simply the outcomes or the product.

4. Qualitative research data is analysed inductively and the information takes shape as the researcher collects and examines the data.
5. Qualitative research is concerned with making meaning from the participants or informants perspectives.

There are many different approaches to doing qualitative research (see, e.g., Cassell and Symon, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Morse & Field, 1995). The goal of my investigation is to understand and analyse what happens in classrooms for Māori students and how this impacts on their (Māori students') attitude to school and learning. I am not aware that I have any preconceived theory in mind and I remain open to the understandings I may glean from my data gathering, thematic coding and analysis. If I have any preconceptions it is the hope that this investigation will enhance understanding of the realities of classroom experiences for Māori students. As the goal of qualitative research guides me to attempt to answer the question "what's going on here?" (Bouma, 1993) in relation to Māori student engagement in learning contexts. I am hopeful there may be significant emerging themes that will support existing theories, and possibly lead to new theories that will give direction for further action in this field.

## **Objectivist and Constructivist Approaches**

A constructivist approach to my investigation means that I must have a relationship with my participants so that I can listen and empathise with their experiences. I can relate to my participants in their terms because of the layers of understanding that I have gleaned in my role as a deputy principal over the last 6 years as well as my 20 years experience as a classroom teacher.

Approaching my investigation from an objectivist stance would be difficult for me as I would have to make a concentrated effort to remain outside of the experience of my participants. Furthermore objectivist approaches to the



data necessitate complex data coding and analysis that can become more important than the actual lived reality of the participants (Charmaz, cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).

## **Criticisms of qualitative research**

Quantitative research methods usually associated with a positivist approach render interviews (e.g. focus group, active and open ended) that produced rich descriptive data as being of no use at all in advancing the study of human behaviour because of the lack of precise measurement and systematic hypothesis testing (Bogdan & Bicklen, 1998). Even the postmodernists, who, in general were open to new ethnographies (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003) do not believe that there is such a thing as truly objective truths. This is especially problematic for the qualitative interviewer who has to, make meaning and communicate the reality and understanding of another human being. Another challenge comes from the critical theorists who analyse findings according to race, class and gender and ultimately the political and emancipatory effects of these findings (Snape & Spencer, 2003). The qualitative researcher uses the results of his or her research to develop grounded theory, to emphasize concepts and to describe in detail the multiple realities of human beings in order to better understand human behaviour. It is interesting to note that there are qualitative researchers who identify themselves as critical theorists and although they adhere to the idea that all social relations are influenced by power relations and therefore must be taken into account, they do accept that their prior political and theoretical beliefs are “informed and transformed by the lived experiences of the group she or he researches” (Roman & Apple, 1990, p. 62).

In response to the criticisms of qualitative research methods, which were often criticised “unscientific”, some researchers (see, for example, Bogdan & Taylor, 1975; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) attempted to formalise their

methods. Denzin & Lincoln (1994) refer to this period as the ‘modernist’ phase. This phase extended through to the 1970s and is still evident today (see, for example, Lofland, 1971, 1995; Taylor and Bogdan, 1998). This modernist phase was evidenced by researchers, who attempted rigorous qualitative studies of social processes such as social control in the classroom and society. Their work was characterized by the combination of open-ended interviews with participant observation and a careful analysis of this type of data in a standardized statistical form (see, for example, Becker, 1998; Becker, Geer, Hughes & Strauss, 1961).

## **Grounded Theory**

In my role as a novice researcher there is growing realisation that interviewing, as an interpretive qualitative research tool requires sensitivity and skill to analyse the rich descriptive data that is gathered. I have decided to utilise the strategies from the grounded theory approach to ensure, sequence, rigour and a focus on meaning in my analysis of the data that I collect. Grounded theory is also referred to as constant comparative analysis and fits into the traditions of qualitative analysis as it relies on detailed qualitative materials. Grounded theory according to Strauss and Corbin means “theory that was derived from data, systematically gathered and analysed through the research process” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.12). Glaser (1978,1992) argues that data should be gathered without any preconceived questions and that the data and theory will emerge through the analysis of “basic social processes” (Glaser, cited in Denzin & Lincoln 2003, p.254). Strauss and Corbin (1998) take a more objectivist stance and tend to approach the data with preconceived ideas by using a framework of analytical questions, hypothesis and methodological techniques.

The important aspect of grounded theory is the emergence of themes in the data. From a researchers position this makes the work challenging, as the themes need to be identified, compared and verified, and often reclassified

in order to establish links and relationships with other sources of the data as well as related literature. This type of in depth analysis of data is also referred to as thematic analysis, “Subjective as it is thematic analysis is more demanding on the personal resources and intellectual art and craft of the individual researcher” (Kellehear, 1993, cited in Mutch 2000, p.177).

In this investigation I have been collecting data from interviews with teachers, interviews with students, attitudinal survey results from both teachers and students and my own observations and research notes over a two-year period. Quite simply I have been thinking about this data and interacting with it as I have gathered it, organised it and reflected upon it in my note taking entries into my research diary. All this happened before I even began to code and classify my data. Because my chosen interview technique with participants is in an open-ended focus group interview situation we (the participants and I) are continually discovering new things together about the data because of the co-constructive nature of open-ended interviews. By contrast grounded theorist researchers who sit more within the objectivist paradigm would be more likely to follow a system of methods in order to discover the reality of participants which can be described, analysed and predicted from an external viewpoint.

A constructivist approach to grounded theory lies between postmodernist (Denzin, 1991; Kreiger, 1991; Tyler, 1986) and postpositivist approaches to qualitative research (Rennie, Phillips, & Quartaro, 1998, cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). It is acceptable for constructivists to include multiple views and voices when they are attempting to tell of the lived experience. To do this well I need to ensure that I have an intimate familiarity (Blumer, 1969) with my participants and their worlds but at the same time I have to ensure that my familiarity doesn’t become an issue of criticism in that the familiarity that is called for doesn’t in turn lead to a casual approach and an incomplete analysis of the data.

## **Researching in a Māori Cultural Context**

Initially I felt very competent in the focus of this investigation as I planned to find out more about the teaching practices and strategies that will help maximise engagement for Māori students. My confidence came from my own teaching experience and my familiarity and ways of knowing about teachers and teaching practice in my role as a senior leader within schools. I felt secure in the knowledge that I was actively involved in the Te Kauhua project at the school I was then deputy principal at and I formally asked the in-school facilitator ( a Māori teacher at the school) if he would support me culturally in aspects of Tikanga Māori that I was unsure of. I felt like I had everything covered. I was wrong.

In hindsight I was naive in these assumptions and may have even appeared arrogant in my lack of consideration of the moral, ethical and cultural obligations I needed to consider. However sometime later at a hui in Palmerston North in 2007 I mentioned this to Benita Tahuri who was the National Whānau Engagement Facilitator for Te Kauhua. Her response was; “You don’t know what you don’t know” This was in no way an excuse for me but it gave me a clear direction for knowing that I had to find out more about what I didn’t know before I started to research anything to do with a culture that wasn’t my own.

## **Māori methodology**

The ideas of collaborative and reciprocal participation need to be understood when considering the approach that is taken when initiating any research that involves the advancement of Māori children. Tuhiwai Smith (1999, p.197) writes about various strategies that non-Māori researchers have used in relation to research in Māori settings. Briefly these are; avoidance, personal development, consultation and making space. These strategies can have both positive and negative consequences for the researcher and the researched. Graeme Smith (cited in Smith L. T., 1999) has posited four models which imply a more culturally sensitive approach to

research carried out by non indigenous researchers. I have tried to ensure that my method is underpinned by three of these models; mentoring, power sharing and empowering outcomes, by asking for direction from the University of Canterbury Kaiahara and seeking guidance from Kaumatua to ensure that my research has relevance and benefit to all participants. As a researcher, I needed to promote a way of being connected to the participants, so that distance, separation and imposition are addressed in the process. The connectedness between the whānau and researcher is seen as a partnership (Wilkie, 2001). This whānau-of-interest approach (Bishop, 1996) is a way researchers can safely engage in research without taking up a position of control over the participants, the method and the results. Understanding this concept of partnership directs me in the approach I take as I attempt to understand the lived reality of Māori students in mainstream classrooms as well as those of their teachers.

### **Cultural Guidance**

I started to look in depth at the challenges that I faced as a novice researcher, investigating the way Māori students preferred to learn. I had to forget the fact that I was a school leader when talking to these Māori students about their experiences at school. The knowledge that these students were going to impart was not my right o take and use as I saw fit as an educator. Although I was not seeking specific cultural knowledge which is tapu (sacred) I was researching the opinions of Māori students who are “the people” (Meade, 2003) and as such they are repositories of the culture.

My first step in ensuring I was approaching this with due care and consideration was to ask for some guidance from Lynne Harata Te Aika the Kaiarahi (person with responsibility for ensuring that Māori cultural matters are adhered to appropriately in research and teaching and learning) at the University of Canterbury. Although my involvement in Te Kauhua had meant that I was working within the frameworks of beliefs that enabled me to respond to theoretical challenges to my own cultural beliefs and

positioning I wasn't able as a Pākehā to approach whānau to discuss the possibilities of my investigation. Lynne suggested that I needed a Māori elder as a cultural guide. I was able to make contact with our local Kaumatua through another teacher at the school who is married to his nephew. This teacher took me around to the Kaumatua's house and after we had a cup of tea I began to share with him what I was investigating. He listened without saying much...I kept talking and then we waited in silence (this in itself was a learning curve for me and was the beginning of me knowing that this was the way that I was to learn from Kaumatua, to wait and listen). I left a copy of my proposal with him and then waited to hear whether he would act as my cultural guide in this investigation. He contacted me within a week and agreed to support me in my investigation. In reading more about the about cultural approaches to research I began to understand the issue of research from a philosophical level, namely who will benefit from the research and who will own the research. I was interviewing tamariki (children) of the whānau and I needed to include them all from the outset of my investigation, keep them informed at every stage of the investigation and present my findings back to them at the conclusion of the interviews.

## **Positioning and Theoretical Stance**

In stating my position I am making the readers aware that I approach the content of this investigation with some insider knowledge as an educator but also a lack of knowledge of the Māori perspective and culture as a Pākehā . This awareness directs me towards self awareness and trying to keep a balance between subjectivity and objectivity (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Patton, 2002). My position as a middle aged Pākehā female school leader means that the understandings that I draw from interviewing teachers and students will be influenced in some way by the person that I am. My theoretical stance about teaching and learning is one where there is a collaborative achievement of tasks which foster co-construction of meaning

for each participant in the learning environment.

The introduction of the New Zealand curriculum (MOE, 2007) will provide us (educators) with the opportunity to move into active problem based inquiry that will have connections with the lives of the students in our classes. I believe this change in focus from planning for coverage to planning for coherence will enable students to take more control over the questions, answers and evaluation of their own learning. If teachers embrace this approach it will in some way help to address the power imbalances in traditional method classrooms where the teacher is dominant and works to “control” the students in order to “cover the set curriculum” (Young 1991). Although I can attempt to co -construct meaning from teachers about what works best for Māori students I can in no way presume to speak on behalf of or advise Māori. I am attempting to fill a “kete” of approaches and practices as an educator that teachers in our school will have experienced value and understand how to implement to best engage Māori students in maximising their learning.

## **Insider Research**

This study was conducted at the school which was then my own work place which means that I was researching as an “insider” (Mutch, 2005, p. 70). Insider research in this instance highlights the fact that the researcher (myself), identifies culturally and professionally with the group of teachers whose practice I am researching and I hold a position of leadership within the school that is the context for my study. In this situation there could be issues of role conflict, confidentiality and possible lack of objectivity that I needed to be conscious of at each stage of my research. I also needed to be aware of the risks that my colleagues and students may feel they were taking when they shared their thoughts and ideas with me and each other. In my role as Deputy Principal there could be some disadvantages when working with teachers who I usually support, guide and appraise. Both the students

and the teachers may feel that I am judging them in my professional role. It was important therefore to discuss these factors with the participants when I initially asked them if they would consider taking part in this investigation. This gave them time to voice any concerns that they may have had and this would also guide me in understanding the type of issues they would feel comfortable in discussing. As it transpired none of the participants (teachers and students) had any concerns and all were willing to go ahead with the interviews.

## **Student Voice**

Nuthall & Alton-Lee's seminal research in the late 1970s and 1980s into classroom interactions between teachers and students has helped move the focus regarding educational research from teacher to student. The methods that they used uncovered childrens' voices and allowed them to be verified as a source of valuable information and part of the contribution of knowledge about teacher effectiveness (Gollop, 2000). When interviewing children, considerations regarding power and threats to validity and reliability have to be considered (Dockrell, Lewis & Lindsay, 2000) but I am hoping that these will be nullified to some extent because of the co-constructive nature of the focus group interviews.

## **Open-ended focus group interviews**

In simple terms, interviewing is a widely used technique to generate social data about the world by asking people to talk about themselves (Gubrium & Holstein, 2003). The information was gathered using open-ended collaboratively constructed (Tripp, 1983) interviews between myself and the participants in a focus group context. Focus group interviews are based on the principle of self disclosure and after establishing a set of focus group rules they provide an effective method for gathering in-depth qualitative



data. The framework of these interviews provides opportunity for discussion, reflection and social support amongst participants (Dockrell, Lewis, & Lindsay, 2000; Hinds, cited in Mutch 2005; Vaughn, Schumm, & Singagub, 1996). This type of semi-structured interview is acceptable within the Māori concepts of hui and kanohi-ki-te-kanohi (face to face) (Mutch, 2005). The concept of ki-te-kanohi in the context of open-ended focus group interviews is portrayed by Graham (2003) as a trusting and sharing approach where the credibility of all participants is nurtured.

It is important to remember that a limitation associated with focus groups is that each group really represents a single observation as the format of the interview enables the participants to be influenced by group interaction (Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook, 2007). Because the open ended nature of these interviews does not control variables such as group dynamics and diversity of opinion the personalities of the participants will influence who says what and when. It is up to the researcher (myself) to try to create a reciprocal dialogue where everyone feels valued and respected in sharing their ideas in their own words. (Reinharz, cited in Bishop & Glynn, 1999). In this format the interviewer co-constructs the meaning of the data with the participants so that the stories that result are a merging of ideas and reflections from the participants and interviewer (Bishop & Glynn, 1999).

## **Limitations of the study**

Although children are never passive participants in the research process (Dockrell, Lindsay & Lewis, 2000) there is always the possibility that the adult researcher can project their own beliefs and expectations onto them as children. This was even more of an issue because of my position as a senior leader within the school. There is also the possibility that children as participants can resist our attempts at finding out about their lived experiences (Tobin, 2000). However the importance of gaining student voice and the need for research that focuses on the realities of student

learning experiences (Nuthall, 2001) add valuable insights for practitioners and these far outweigh the possible limitations of this investigation.

When I started this research I was working at the school where this investigation was situated. Toward the end of my second year at the school I won a principalship at another school and so will not be returning to the school by the time these findings are ready for submission. The only aspect of this being a limitation is that I will not be part of the school community and this may affect my position in relation to reporting back to the whānau. After speaking with the Kaumatua about this, he considers that the whānau of the school I am going to (which is a contributing school to the intermediate I was at previously) will also benefit from these results and this will be a way of making connections with the wider community at my new school. As a way of introduction the Kaumatua is going to accompany me to my new school and introduce me to the whānau. I am very grateful for this and thank him for this initiative. I will of course ensure that the principal and teachers of the school where this investigation was situated receive a copy of my completed investigation and would ask that the facilitator of Te Kauhua would share these findings in whatever forum he sees fit.

# **Chapter 4**

## **Process**

### **Ethical Considerations**

The investigation into teaching practices that maximise Māori student engagement and attitude began in 2007 when the Te Kauhua Māori in mainstream project was implemented into the school. As I was supporting the facilitator of this project and in turn supporting teachers to improve their practice in my role as Deputy Principal at the school I began to keep a research diary noting how teachers applied the theory from professional readings as part of Te Kauhua. I endeavoured to be open with all of the nine teachers who were part of the initial group in the beginning stages of the project and assured them at that stage that my observations would be to help scope my investigation and would not be used in any way to assess or monitor their efforts. As the year progressed and there were some obvious demonstrable changes in attitude and practice I asked teachers individually if they would mind if I documented what I saw, and assured them of anonymity. All of the teachers were willing to participate and to have aspects of their practice and reflections documented. I have quoted teachers from my dairy and written about the changes in attitudes and classroom culture that I have observed over the last two years to support the data from the interviews and the surveys.

### **Informed consent by teachers**

In the second year of the investigation I asked four of the teachers (a mix of three who had been on the project in the first year and one who had just joined it in the second year) if they would consider being part of the focus group interviews. I chose these particular teachers as it meant I had two female teachers and two male teachers and a mix of teaching experience ranging from one to fifteen years. As part of gaining ethical clearance from the University of Canterbury I sent out letters of explanation to the board of

trustees members, the principal and the teachers who I had approached to take part in the interviews. I enclosed a consent form in the letters to the teachers and gave them time to think about the implications and possible risks involved. All of the teachers were satisfied that the interviews held no risk to them professionally or personally.

### **Selection of the students**

Initially I randomly selected nine Māori students from among the classes of the four teachers by choosing every third name from each class list and then counting five names to select the next child until three Māori students in each class had been selected. I had asked for the class lists to be alphabetical in order and not sorted into gender as this may have affected the randomness of the sample. These students were also given a letter of explanation for their parents and consent form to bring back to school. Before this letter went home I spoke with the students at school in the library and gave them the opportunity to ask any questions before they went home to discuss it with their parents. I made it very clear that their privacy and anonymity would be protected as I wasn't going to use any names in the writing up of my investigation and I would not identify them in my transcripts. The relationship between the students and myself as an adult and a teacher was carefully considered as I wanted to be sure that the students did not feel vulnerable in any way (Costley, 2000). I had to make it very clear to them that I wasn't acting as the deputy principal in my researcher role, and in fact I wasn't even acting as a teacher at the school, I was a learner just like them and I was asking them if they would share their knowledge with me.

As this was in fact an informed consent I gave the students a consent form to sign as well. All of the forms from the parents came back except for one, which indicated in strong written terms that they were not willing for me to interview their child. I decided not to replace this student with another one and settled for eight students to interview. I also sought permission from the facilitator for Te Kauhua in the school, to use information from the milestone reports that he wrote up and sent to the Ministry of Education as part of the requirements of the Te Kauhua contract. I wanted to access the

information relating to surveys that he had carried out with Māori students and with teachers. This permission was kindly granted.

### **Confidentiality**

The teachers and the students were assured that all of the interviewing would be situated in a place that was private and therefore their anonymity would be protected. To add further protection to their anonymity the name of the school was not revealed. I assured them that all taped interviews and written records would be kept in a locked cupboard in my office at school and eventually would be stored in a locked cupboard at my home.

### **Stress or psychological harm**

Because of the qualitative social research methods that were used in this investigation, the issue of stress must be considered. I have already mentioned that both teacher and students were made aware of possible risks in relation to how they might feel as the investigation proceeded. In all of the documentation the participants were assured that at any time they could withdraw from being involved in this investigation without repercussion.

As the researcher it was my responsibility to ensure that I was honouring the culture of the Māori students whom I was interviewing. I considered this in the methodology that I used and actively sought cultural guidance from the Kaumatua. Ensuring that I could consult and engage in conversations with the Kaumatua was an integral action step in the schedule of my investigation as it enabled me to act knowledgeably and with confidence that I was treating the students and their culture appropriately. I was able to discuss any concerns or uncertainties that I had with Kaumatua at school, at his house and on the phone. At every stage of the investigation I ensured that the students had cultural support and were made to feel comfortable both in the cultural appropriateness of the place for the interviews, the way we were seated and who else was present in the room. I also had to consider the teachers of these students. They would be aware of the comments that the students made just from reading the finished investigation and they may

be able to identify their own teaching practice from within these comments. This would probably not be an issue of concern except if the comments were negative about the teacher or their practice. As there was a mix of teacher personality and experience within the group I interviewed, I had to draw their attention to this possibility, and have them actually try to imagine how they would feel if they thought a negative comment was referring to their practice. In most cases I would not need to use negative comments as the investigation focuses on good practice but there is the possibility that I might have to quote something less than complimentary. The teachers thought about this and assured me that this wouldn't be an issue of concern for them

.

### **Interviews with Students**

It was important for me to allow the student voice to be heard so I organised a two hour time slot where the students were released from class. I interviewed the students in the school whare, which is a culturally safe situation for a meeting and negates issues of power that may exist in the minds of the students. If the interviews were held in a classroom or in my office, issues of power and positioning would negate the advantages of co-construction. I asked Kaumatua to be present when I interviewed the students so that there was cultural control over the interpretation of the questions and responses as well as the construction of meaning and possible recommendations. It could be argued that involving the Kaumatua may have elicited a seemingly biased positive response from the children, as he is held in high regard by the Māori community and the students all knew the Kaumatua because of his ongoing involvement with the school. Being aware of this I talked to the students with the Kaumatua about the importance of them feeling free to say how they were really feeling and that their honest responses were something very special that I felt privileged to hear. I reiterated that this was about them sharing their ideas about the ways they preferred to learn and what they liked or disliked at school and there would be no judgement of what they said in this room. When we felt that everyone had an understanding of this and felt comfortable the Kaumatua started the

session with a karakia (prayer). This aspect of wairua (spirituality) acts to bind all the participants of the interview together (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). We then talked about some ground rules, which were similar to restorative type class conferences that students had been involved in during their time at the school. We agreed that what was talked about during the course of the interview would not be discussed outside of this context, only one person was able to speak at any one time and if any of the participants felt uncomfortable then they could choose to sit out of the interview.

Early on in the focus group interview I asked questions like: “Tell me about a time that you can remember when you really enjoyed learning?” “Can you tell me ways that your teacher helps you to learn?” “Can you think of a time when you found it difficult/frustrating in class?” Initially the students were reluctant to speak and felt self-conscious because of the audio-recorder that I was using, but with encouragement they all contributed, although two of the students were more forthcoming than the others. At one stage during the interview when the students were talking about what they didn’t like in the classroom, Kaumatua told them some stories about what it was like when he was at school. He had their undivided attention while he talked for 20 minutes; he concluded by empathising with them but also encouraging them. This storytelling aspect of Māori pedagogy which told the story of events in the past was linked to the present and the future (Bishop & Glynn, 1999) of these students as it encouraged them to persevere.

The advantages of recording the focus group interviews meant that I had an accurate record of all of the verbal dialogue, including giggles, silences, and uncertain tones. However the disadvantage was that I had no record of non-verbal behaviours that may have been present. I did note down facial expressions and any other obvious gestures on my note pad when the children spoke, and fortunately these nuances were also evident in the detail on the audio-tape. The interview took place after interval (11am.) and lasted for ninety minutes. After I had stopped recording I asked them if they could develop a list of things that they liked and or preferred about the way teachers taught them in class. They were quite forthcoming about this and

their suggestions included: working with buddies but not necessarily their friends; teacher working with them in a small group or on their own and working in co-operative situations where everyone has a role to play. It is important to remember that the purpose of the focus group interview is not to gain consensus (Vaughn, Schumm, & Singagub, 1996) so it was the range of opinions that had been expressed and that were evident and transparent for all participants to see that mattered. This was a safety check for me to ensure that the interpretations I had made were the same as the students and the Kaumatua. The interviews culminated in a lunch that I provided. In terms of Māori culture it is important to provide kai (food) for visitors, and as these students and the Kaumatua were essentially visitors in my domain at school it would be considered good manners in my role as convener of the meeting to provide food for them.

### **Interviews with teachers**

The focus group interviews with the teachers were held after school on a Wednesday afternoon in a meeting room. In consideration of the busy day that teachers have and in an effort to make them comfortable we agreed that the interview would not take any longer than an hour. Knowing the teachers personally and professionally I felt was an advantage “closeness does not make bias and loss of perspective inevitable” (Patton, 2002, p.49). However I had to be mindful that my questioning wasn’t leading them towards information that I may have wanted to uncover. Because these teachers were involved in purposeful action research cycles in their classrooms to engage Māori students I started the interview by asking about these. As with any group of teachers talking together the conversation flowed with all teachers participating. We concluded our interview after an hour with a shared afternoon tea.

After I had transcribed the interviews I sent copies to the teachers in order to enhance the credibility and integrity of my data (Janesick, 1994; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998), and I asked teachers for comments and or corrections if they deemed it necessary. In an effort to give something back to the teachers



(Harrison, MacGibbon & Morton, 2001) I continued to share themes as they emerged through my analysis and they continued to communicate and clarify aspects of their practice with me. I did the same with the students although I didn't send them a copy of the transcript. I had previously arranged a meeting with them to give them a small token of my appreciation for their participation in the interviews and it was at this meeting I provided copies of the transcripts for the students to read together. The students were very interested to see their spoken words written and they pored over the transcripts looking for their "parts" in the interview with obvious enjoyment.

### **Selecting themes**

In writing up the transcripts I was beginning to see information and categories emerge that I had expected to uncover. I had to stop and check myself at this point and resolved to approach the data with an open-mind and be disciplined and unbiased in the highlighting and coding of categories. It was important to make this conscious effort, as it is only with an open mind that the defining and sorting of categories would lead me deeper into my thematic analysis. In the second step of my coding process it became obvious that there were some links between the themes emerging from the student interviews and the themes emerging from the teacher interviews. The intersection of these themes became the catalyst in helping me select the content of my results and in depth discussion aspects of this investigation. Patton (1990) reminds us that qualitative researchers should not hold back and should trust the process of analysis. This gave me confidence as a novice researcher to be flexible in selecting the themes to highlight.

### **Triangulation**

As a way of triangulating my data and adding credibility to the emerging themes I used three other sources of data in order to support the themes emerging from the interviews. I used the observations recorded in my

research diary that I had kept as I followed the experiences and reflections of teachers on the Te Kauhua project in the school over the course of two years. I also used the results of a teacher attitudinal survey, (appendix 1) which was administered to teachers involved in Te Kauhua in 2007. This gave me valuable information about changes in teacher attitude and demonstrable changes in their practice.

I used the data gathered from the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) *Me and my School Survey* (NZCER, 2008), (appendix 2) to gather data from the students about how they felt about school, their participation in school and their commitment to and involvement in learning. The *Me and My School Survey* is made up of 36 items that consist of a four point agreement scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The items chosen have been sourced from literature to ascertain the behavioural, affective and cognitive aspects of student engagement (Fredricks, Blumenfield & Paris, 2004). This was administered to all year eight Māori students (62 students) at the school at the end of 2008. This could be viewed as providing my research with an element of mixed methodology but the numerical data from these surveys relates only to the eight students whom I interviewed as these students were selected from classes with teachers who are involved in Te Kauhua. I consider this sample to be too small to be a credible representation of quantitative data. I have used their responses to highlight possible reasons for some of the findings in this investigation. I make no generalisations about the whole year eight Māori cohort except to say that the results from the larger group are mirrored in the results of the group of eight students whom I interviewed.

# **Chapter 5**

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Introduction**

In the first part of this section I had planned to start exploring the themes that were emerging from the students through the focus group interviews and the collection of student responses in the NZCER surveys. I was then going to discuss the themes that had emerged from the focus group interviews with teachers, my own research diary which I had been keeping over two years and the survey focusing on changes in teacher attitudes and practices as a part of the Te Kauhua project. However as I started to write I found it increasingly difficult to highlight aspects of the data from the students without comparing it to the data from the teachers. The drive to compare and contrast the emerging themes from the teachers and the students, which is what thematic analysis intends (Kellehear, 1993; Le Compte & Preissle, 1993) began to create a new format for these results and so I have decided to reveal the results of the data from both the students and the teachers together using the themes from the interviews, the NZCER data results, my research diary and the results from the teacher attitudinal survey. In doing so it is inevitable that some discussion of these results will be uncovered in order to show comparisons between the two sets of data and so I have decided to merge my results and discussion sections together. I will address the implications of the data and subsequent discussion in my conclusion where I will validate my findings and strengthen my argument by relating themes back to the literature.

Nine themes emerged from the analyses of both sets of interviews. Some of these related directly to the experiences of the students and some intersected with the practice of the teachers. These themes provide clear direction for further investigation into improving classroom experiences for Māori students.

1. Māori student are positive about school.
2. Teachers have high expectations for their Māori students.
3. Students are proud of their achievements and efforts.
4. Teachers have had to have a clear focus and be willing to put in extra effort in order to get to know the preferences and needs of their Māori students..
5. Teachers have been actively valuing and acknowledging the culture of their Māori students.
6. Māori students prefer to work in smaller group situations.
7. Teachers recognise the value and need for reflective practice.
8. Students are often hesitant or shy about sharing ideas in front of the larger group, i.e. class or syndicate
9. Māori students feel frustrated when they can't access the teacher easily.

I will focus on each of these themes as they relate to the experience of the student, the practice of the teachers and the evidence from supporting data and literature.

## A Summary of Emerging Themes

### **1. Students have positive attitudes to learning and school**

This was by far the most common theme that emerged from both the interviews and the surveys.

I like it when we talk about things that happen around the world, like wars and stuff...sometimes we have our papers in front of us and we have to write bits about it and stuff, like who, what, when and how.

(Female Student)

I like working in groups...we usually just get ourselves into little

a groups and work away at it.

(Male Student)

I like to act (in drama) ...its fun.

(Female Student)

I like class discussions but it's better when the teacher works with us in a group.

(Male Student)

The responses from the eight students that I interviewed associated with this theme from the NZCER survey also indicate positive attitudes to school (see Table 1, on following page)

<b>Table 1.</b> <i>Me &amp; My School Survey</i>				
<b><i>Item number</i></b>	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
<b><i>1. Most mornings I look forward to going to school</i></b>	0	0	5	3
<b><i>3. Most of the time being at school puts me in a good mood</i></b>	0	0	7	1
<b><i>23. I am interested in what I am learning at school</i></b>	0	1	5	2

All of the eight students usually looked forward to going to school and they all felt that being at school put them in a good mood most of the time. There was one negative response when one of students disagreed with that fact that he/she was interested in what was they were learning at school. As well as being positive about what they were learning and how they were learning, students also indicated in the interviews that they liked physical education, poetry, story writing and thinking activities, and they could see the value of maths, reading and social studies to ensure success at high school.

Although this investigation is focused on the attitude and engagement of

Māori students, the findings will also have implications for maximising Māori student achievement. I could not find any detailed empirical studies that verified a clear link between a positive attitude to school and student achievement. Dr Calweti's (The Executive Director of the United States Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development from 1973 – 1992) research on improving student achievement (cited in Alton-Lee, 2003) focuses on student motivation and aspiration. The evidence from Calweti's research is integrated throughout Alton-Lee's *Quality Teaching for Diverse Students in Schooling: Best Evidence Synthesis* (2003) but it is difficult to isolate any clear directives relating specifically to student motivation and aspirations. From a common sense viewpoint and my professional opinion I would postulate that students who feel positive about school would be more likely to achieve at school. However from an objective approach I have to remain focused on outcomes based evidence and therefore cannot afford to rest comfortably in "tacit knowledge, opinion and histories masquerading as fact" (Earl, cited in Timperley et al., 2007, p.ix).

What is evident in literature is the link between motivation and learning outcomes for students, (see Boekaerts, 2003; Skinner 1995). Motivational beliefs act as a frame of reference that guides feelings and actions within a certain context. If a student brings positive beliefs about school into the classroom then this will provide a positive context for learning. It is worth noting that once a motivational belief is formed (either positive or negative) then it is very resistant to change. This indicates the importance of teachers knowing their individual students attitudes and motivations to learning and planning learning activities to build on these positive motivations and beliefs.

## **2. Teachers have high expectations of their Māori students**

In the interviews with the teachers of these students the most common theme that emerged was that these teachers had high expectations for their Māori students. However as I have already mentioned in chapter two, high expectations for Māori students' academic and social outcomes and

believing it with a passion is not enough, these beliefs must be supported by quality teaching (Alton-Lee, 2003) if teachers are to make a difference for Māori students. When comparing this theme of teachers having high expectations for their Māori students, with the most common theme in the student interviews, which was that students had a positive attitude to school, it would be acceptable to assume that there was a relationship between the two themes. One of the main aims of Te Kauhua was for teachers to understand, identify and explicitly reject deficit theorising as a reason why Māori students may not be achieving (Bishop et al., 2007). This calls for teachers to rethink their assumptions about Māori students and look at themselves and their teaching practices. My research dairy notes that increasingly teachers are open to ideas and strategies that will improve outcomes for students. They are no longer looking at the problem as though it was outside their realm of control but looking for a solution from within themselves utilising the supports that the school leaders, other teachers and the wider community have to offer.

When the teachers at this school first started having professional conversations about different ways teachers could be improving opportunities for Māori students to engage in the curriculum there was a general consensus that Māori students preferred physical education and the hands on component of technology subjects (ie; food technology, wood and metal technology and textiles). This had allowed teachers to be comfortable (rightly or wrongly) in the belief that Māori students' needs were being catered for in the kinaesthetically based subjects within the timetables that existed in the intermediate context. No actual data had been gathered to support these beliefs except that the technology teachers reported that Māori students had high levels of engagement in their subject options. In order to find out more about these assumptions the facilitator for Te Kauhua surveyed the Māori students in seven classes across the school about their preferences. He used a plus, minus and interesting format (PMI) to generate discussions with Māori students and then collated the information. The assumptions about physical education and technology were in part correct but there was a lot more that Māori students enjoyed, for example: drama,

working with computers, art, reading, writing poetry, science experiments, Te reo, and learning about their culture and genealogy. The voices of these students provided teachers with indications and clarity about where and how to start better attending to the preferences and learning styles of Māori students within the classroom.

**3. Students are proud of their efforts and achievements**

This would seem an obvious statement but it is worth mentioning because of the initial catalyst for this research. During the preliminary stages of Te Kauhua at the school, teachers were asked to identify the areas of concern that they needed to focus on to maximise outcomes for Māori students. All of the teachers felt that the main issue was linked to lack of student engagement and an indifferent attitude in class rather than a desire for achievement. The themes that were evident in the student interviews were contrary to these perceptions as the students demonstrated a focus on wanting to achieve to a high standard. (It must be noted that these were initial teacher perceptions, which acted as baseline indicators at the beginning of the implementation of Te Kauhua project into the school)

I like it when everyone gets to find out what I wrote. Yeah, cos when you have worked hard you want other people to listen to you.

(Female Student)

I'm real pleased about my reading, which I didn't used to like but the teacher gives us interesting stuff to read...like the Bermuda triangle and stuff and I read all of it...yeah and I want to read more stuff like that cos I can.

(Male Student)

I wrote a story earlier in the year and we were allowed to choose the topic...yeah it was the best story I have written. It was good.

(Male Student)

<b>Table 2.</b>
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<i>Me &amp; My School Survey</i>				
<b>Item number</b>	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>22. I do as little work as possible I just want to get by</b>	3	3	0	0
<b>24. I look for ways that I can improve my school work</b>	0	1	6	1
<b>30. At school I really care that I do my best work</b>	0	0	5	3

There was one response that leaned toward the negative end of the scale where one student disagreed that he/she looked for ways to improve their work. It could be argued that the student in this case always does their best work from the outset as is suggested in item #30. However the responses regarding student attitude towards school in these items were mostly positive and supports the interview data which suggests that Māori students are proud of their achievements at school and strive to do their best.

#### **4. Teacher efforts in helping students learn**

Students noticed the way teachers helped them both in group situations and in one to one learning contexts. They were confident in asking their teachers to help them, either by putting their hand up or approaching the teacher at the “front of the class” (interview transcript). In some instances the pupils mentioned where the teacher just came alongside them and helped them.

Teacher helps me in maths a lot...I usually put my hand up and ask, and he comes and sits beside me and helps me.

(Male Student)

Like in reading, whenever I stop reading he just comes beside me and encourages me to keep going. I've read heaps in the last couple of terms.

(Male Student)

Well she goes around to everyone and helps them...she looks at everyone's work but the people who need help the most she goes with them. She writes our ideas up on the board that we think of so that we can remember them and use them.

(Female Student)

Oh I ask the teacher, and we use blocks sometimes (teacher) just uses them to help me work it out.

(Female Student)

<b>Table 3.</b> <i>Me &amp; My School Survey</i>				
<b><i>Item number</i></b>	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
<b><i>11. My Family's culture is treated with respect by the teachers at this school</i></b>	0	0	4	4
<b><i>12. I am comfortable talking to teachers at this school about problems</i></b>	0	1	6	1
<b><i>14. Most of my teachers like me</i></b>	0	0	8	0
<b><i>16. I feel my teachers help me to learn</i></b>	0	0	6	2

The response from this selection of the survey identify that students feel teachers appreciate and respect their culture and that they feel liked by the teachers at the school. The responses show that students recognise the help that their teachers give them to help them to learn. In item #12, (table 3) one of the students indicates that he/she did not feel comfortable talking to teachers about problems. This was the only slightly negative response out of a possible 16 responses relating to the efforts that teachers make to help students feel comfortable and assist them in their learning.

Hattie in his 2009 publication *Visible Learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement* cites the work of researchers who found that when students were asked about their best teachers, the common qualities that students identified were teachers who built relationships with their students (Batten & Girling-Butcher, 1981), and teachers who took the time to help students understand their work (Sizemore, 1981).

When looking at the themes that emerged from interviews with the teachers there is a very clear link between the student perception of teachers helping them learn and the actual effort that teachers put into helping their students learn. Out of the nine themes that emerged from the teaching interviews, teacher efforts in helping students learn came through with more indicators than anything else.

Their success depends on the teacher ...how much extra work I am prepared to put in at the beginning of the learning and when the learning is taking place is what makes the difference.

(Male Teacher)

One boy who I just think is phenomenal and, um he's just so shy. I am trying to coax him out to take on more of an active role in like co-operative learning. Like he's been the leader, and that was really difficult for him to start with but the more he does it the more everyone can see what he is capable of. He's really come out of his shell more this year and his parents have definitely noticed it.

(Female Teacher)

The ways that teachers helped students to learn were also identified by the students. Comments like “comes beside me” and “sits beside me” were mentioned on six different occasions by the students during the interview. I asked the students why they found that helpful and they said that it gave them more time with the teacher so that he/she could help them understand better and that they felt more comfortable when the teacher could talk with them one to one or in a small group setting because then they felt they could

ask questions that they may not feel comfortable asking in front of the whole class. The teacher interviews didn't identify this particular aspect of teacher positioning in relation to the student and helping them learn. However in a classroom of 30 students teachers are ideally situating themselves to suit the learning and learners and may be only aware of working with a group without the knowledge that students see this as "beside them". In a small scale investigation like this it is not feasible to look at the quality and intent of the teacher and student interactions. For example, are the students initiating interactions for further learning or just getting help to come up with the expected answers? (Young, 1991). These issues could be further investigated in the context of traditional and discursive classrooms and the wider issues of unequal power relationships in the classroom (Smith, 1997).

Closely related to this aspect of strategies that maximise Māori students' attitude and engagement is the quality of the relationships that teachers build with their students. This theme was apparent from the teachers' interviews. It would seem obvious that teachers would want to work at forming good relationships with their students and in all of the data that I collected the teachers at this school were able to articulate and demonstrate these good relationships.

The kids just know you have a respect for them and an appreciation of their culture, and the other thing is just...making an effort to form relationships with them... asking them about those really little things...making sure your interactions with them are non confrontational. You don't go **at** them, you get **beside** them.

(Female Teacher)

They don't need to be big things but just showing an interest or even making a comment like..."Oh hey, you've had your hair cut" or asking things about their weekend. I think that taking an interest in them as individuals is far more important than we realise.

(Female Teacher)

The importance of developing strong relationships with students was highlighted as a demonstrable change in practice by the teachers who took part in the Te Kauhua teacher attitudinal change survey. Teachers were asked to provide examples of changes in their professional practice as a result of their involvement in Te Kauhua. When indicating changes relating to interactions with students, teachers noted that they had made a conscious effort to “take more interest in individual students in order to build relationships” (male teacher) and “Thought more deeply about ways of communicating.... this has allowed me develop a more personal relationship with each student” (female teacher). The comments from the students authenticate that this focus on relationships was evident in the everyday practices in the classrooms of these teachers.

I like the teachers that you can just talk to...like normally, instead of having to think of them as your teacher.

(Female Student)

When teachers talk to you about...like what you did in the weekend, it makes me feel like they are interested in me, not just what I do at school.

(Female Student)

I dunno...like (teacher) just talks to me normally like I was his friend.

(Male Student)

Like she (teacher) understands me, instead of treating me like...like I don't know what I believe.

(Female Student)

It is widely accepted that the quality of the relationship between students and teachers is a key element of best practice (see, for example, Alton-Lee,

2003; Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Hattie, 2003; Timperley, et al., 2007). What is of interest here is that these teachers actually focused on ways to improve their relationships with their students. The comments from the teacher attitudinal survey show it was the effort that they put in as teachers that made the difference for these students. It is not sufficient to assume that teachers will naturally or inherently know how to be able to build relationships with their diverse students. The successes in these classroom was due to the fact that teachers became reflective about their own practice, about what was happening in their classrooms for Māori students and made a conscious effort to change and improve the way they communicated with their Māori students.

The last student comment in above list perplexed me as I tried to construe what the student meant by “like I don’t know what I believe”. As with these teachers who reflected on ways to communicate with their students it is not until you start getting serious about reflective thought, actually empathising with student experiences that you begin to get a small glimpse of what they (Māori students) actually experience in schools. This comment from *Culture Speaks* (Bishop & Berryman, 2006) not only explicates the experience of this student but also reminds me of my inability as a Pākehā outsider to actually understand the experiences of these Māori students.

Cultural differences were seen as lying not so much in the visible elements of the culture or even the protocols that outsiders so often associate with Māori people, but rather in the invisible elements. These elements are difficult for outsiders to understand because they are experiential. In New Zealand, for Māori people, these experiences include being marginalised, not being taken notice of, and having one’s very way of seeing the world ignored or overridden.

(Bishop & Berryman, 2006 p.266)

The effort required on the part of the teacher is embedded in the principle of Manaakitanga which is primarily about hospitality to visitors but relates to

courtesy and in turn for caring about Māori students as Māori above all else (Durie, 1994; Tuuta et al 2004). The words “mana” and “aki” that are encapsulated in the word Manaakitanga refer to authority and the task of urging someone to act. The importance of the task of the teacher in this concept is paramount in building a nurturing and supportive environment where Māori students can be themselves (Bishop & Berryman, 2006).

## **5. Teachers value and acknowledge Māori culture**

Developing cultural competence is an important aspect for teachers if they are serious about inclusive education (Harris, 1996). As the focus for Te Kauhua is about raising engagement of Māori students in classroom learning contexts, it is essential that teachers are prepared to make an effort to find out about Māori culture and Māori pedagogy. This effort meant that teachers had to set aside time to read deeply in an effort to understand more about Māori concepts within a Māori worldview. Teachers were provided with selected readings from Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Glynn, 1998; Durie, 2001; Hemara, 2000; and Shields, Bishop & Masawai, 2005. To supplement these readings the teachers were introduced to material from *Kia hiwa ra! – listen to the culture* (Macfarlane, 2004). Chapter eight of Macfarlane's book articulates concepts that are central for understanding Māori culture and its relevance for the future. Macfarlane (2004) suggests strategies for teachers to use in their classrooms which will support Māori concepts and values and provide a base for effective classroom management. Understanding and deepening their knowledge enabled teachers to actively change practices in their classrooms to allow these concepts to flourish. In next five paragraphs I highlight the knowledge and strategies that the teachers implemented as a result of gaining a deeper understanding of Māori pedagogical practices.

The teachers organised their classrooms around relationships (Whānaungtanga) and concentrated on involving parents and families in discussions affecting their children. Other strategies like organising a class

hui (meeting), involving people in the community with expertise in Tikanga Māori and using co-operative learning to maximise opportunities for inclusive participation and relationship building also helped to build meaningful relationships between all participants in the classroom Macfarlane (2004).

Teachers also began to understand that from a Māori worldview they were expected to be knowledgeable about the content of the curriculum and the pedagogical practices that support effective teaching (Rangatiratanga). This concept relates to having mana in the classroom, which according to Tate (1990) is a force that can bring about change and move people. In order to be more effective and develop their mana teachers actively tried to use and improve strategies like effective body language, making eye contact and being assertive in the context of understanding, reciprocity and warmth.

Greeting and directing students on their arrival, directing attention equitably among students and working from a range of vantage points within the room were some of the specific behaviours that teachers focused on in order to nurture the emotional and academic needs of their students. These practices support the concept of Manaakitanga which is essential in Māori pedagogy and one which I have already mentioned in the previous section relating to the ways that teachers help students learn and also in the section on Kaupapa Māori.

Teachers also focused on the concept of kotahitanga which relates to notions of unity and bonding and this was translated into the classroom by ensuring that the processes for management and discipline were inclusive and involved input from teachers and students. Some strategies teachers used to encourage and embellish this concept were to give whole class rewards, having one to one time with the students and taking a traditional Māori cultural approach to discipline by conferencing with focus on restoration rather than blame.

The connectedness and importance of these four concepts are underpinned



by the fifth concept of Pumanawatanga which relates to the morale and heart of the school. Awareness of this concept meant that all participants have responsibility to ensure that the tone of the school is supported and evident in the everyday practices in the staffroom, classrooms, playground and in relationships with the wider community and whānau.

What was obvious from the interviews and my research diary entries since the implementation of Te Kauhua was the change of attitude towards professional readings relating to pedagogy. At the beginning of the project, when selecting professional reading for these teachers the general consensus was that it “was heavy going in terms of the types of readings” and “these readings are good but they take time to digest”. In my diary I noted that teachers were probably right, they do need time but they also needed more practice at reading about theory and applying it to practice. As with all contexts, the doing is the learning (Fullan, 2008) and once they started to actually apply small aspects of what they had read they were encouraged by the results and in turn encouraged to read some more. In six months time teachers were supplying me with readings of their own that they had found relating to Māori student achievement and pedagogical practice. The ongoing gain of this sort of teacher focus is that teachers begin to really know and understand their Māori students. They had gleaned huge amounts of knowledge about what worked for Māori students, they were acknowledging “their mana – their specialness” (Bishop & Glynn, 1999, p.170).

In discussions I will always try to relate the context of whatever I am teaching by acknowledging things Māori.

(Female Teacher)

My Māori students love to lead, they just need the opportunity to be the leaders and show what they are capable of.

(Male Teacher)

You know when we went to the whare visit...they took charge of that,

and they were the ones standing up the front singing at the top of their lungs...you know. The other kids then respect their culture more because they see their enthusiasm for it and the knowledge that they have. The other students blossomed too... well they all do having students leading them and teaching them. It's been great for me being more of a learner as well rather than the person teaching.

(Female Teacher)

They also recognised what didn't work for Māori students;

I have noticed that when some teachers deal with Māori kids in that confrontational way...you know the "stand up and tell me what you were doing just then" type of thing especially in front of an audience. They just don't respond to that or they shut down and I think they probably lose a lot of respect for the teacher as a person.

(Female Teacher)

## **6. Students prefer working in small groups and working with a peer**

The majority of the comments about working in small groups came from students relating to a preference about feeling more comfortable in sharing in a small group and also from the fact that they were able to ask for feedback about their ideas and for help when they didn't understand the learning. When I asked the students if they chose their own groupings or whether the group make up was teacher driven they told me that the teacher chose the groups most of the time and although they would like to choose to sit with their friends they explained that they wouldn't work as well and would probably talk too much. Teachers verified this but said that over the course of the year students had made their own choices to sit with people they knew they could work with in preference to sitting with their close friends.

If we choose our own groups we won't learn much, cos we talk all the time.

(Female Student)

I like to work with a buddy in class because sometimes when I am doing my work I get stuck and I like to look at their answers... or sometimes if you get stuck when you are writing, you might read it to them and they might suggest something.

(Female Student)

Oh yeah when we move into groups we get a topic and we had to rewrite it and share it to the class, like a newspaper. It's good because the whole group contributes and then you feel okay about it when you have to present it to the whole class.

(Male Student)

There has been a school wide focus on the key competency of “Managing Self” (MOE, 2007, p. 12) and students were getting better at managing themselves by making better choices. This key competency had been used to help students set learning goals for themselves and was a part of the first pupil report that went home to parents in term one. The students revisited these goals throughout the year and monitored their own progress. The results of their progress are collated as part of school wide data and used for strategic planning.

Māori pedagogy favours group and co-operative learning over an individual approach as it encompasses the everyday interaction of working in whānau process (Glynn, 1998). In the Evaluation of Te Kauhua Māori in mainstream pilot project report to the Ministry of Education (2004) there is a clear focus on co-operative learning as being one of the necessary strategies that teachers need to continue to model in order to enhance their pedagogy and practice (Tuuta et al., 2004). Co-operative learning not only affects the potential for cognitive learning but it also promotes affective and social benefits (Brophy, 2001). Slavin (1990), concluded that co-operative learning works best when the expectation is that students work together to achieve a group goal but that these group goals are combined with individual accountability. Roseth, Fang, Johnson & Johnson (2006) in their

investigation of the effects of co-operative learning on middle school students found that interpersonal relations have the strongest influence on achievement. They suggested that when wanting to increase student achievement teachers should allow students to work with a friend (Roseth et al. 2006).

Interestingly, teachers didn't mention students' preferences for working in a group except in the context of co-operative learning. There was more mention of the fact that students needed choices in where they sat during the day and the situational restraints that the physical classroom had upon student interaction and learning. Teachers are quick to recognise what works for student learning when they observed it happening. For example, one of the teachers who was part of Te Kauhua had been visiting another school and observed modular desks that were easily grouped and regrouped depending on the need. She came back to school and said to me, "What do I have to do to get furniture like that in my classroom?" Obviously it wasn't just the furniture itself that she liked, she recognised that it was the level of student interaction and engagement that she was trying to achieve in her classroom but which would be so much easier if she had the furniture to support her efforts in allowing this happen easily.

## **7. Importance of teacher reflective practice / professional learning communities**

What is relevant and achievable in this investigation is to emphasise the need for ongoing reflective practice as identified by teachers in my observations and research notes over the two year time period in working alongside these teachers. Teachers awareness of the advantages of reflective practice were voiced after the initial professional development relating creating useful "teacher talk". This seemed to act as catalyst for teachers to talk about their practice and gave them a safe place to reposition themselves in discussions relating to Māori student achievement.

It's really good to be able to talk about students needs and know it will be positive... not just like a staffroom discussion but a discussion where we are focused on looking at ways that we can do better for students. We don't get enough time to do this positive teacher talk stuff.

(Female Teacher)

The Te Kauhua model of professional development involves teachers in reflective practice that focuses on their own needs, their students' needs and the impact of their teaching practice. A significant aspect of this model is the alignment it has within educational literature that discusses the requirements of effective teacher learning and practice (Bruner, J., 1996; Nuthall, G., & Alton-Lee, A., 1997; Robinson, V., & Lai, M., 2006; Timperley et al., 2007). In this instance, teachers are involved in working with other teachers, engaging in teacher talk and building new knowledge as a part of a professional learning community. Teacher collegiality and collaboration are viewed as essential aspects of effective professional development (Lieberman & Millar, 1999; Stoll & Fink 1996) and may involve internal conflict where conversations about practice and beliefs are encouraged. Within international literature, internal conflict and challenge are seen as part of the improvement journey (Fullan, 1999).

At the beginning of this two year time frame in which this investigation took place I observed teachers not wanting to share elements of their practice (which in my visits to classrooms I had identified as being "good practice"). Their unwillingness to share was not because they wanted to keep ownership of their ideas but because of a fear of ridicule. "We don't need to do this" was one comment that an exemplary teacher made to me when I asked about her reticence in inviting teachers into her classroom to observe the good things that were happening for students. As Te Kauhua progressed through the year and action research groups began to take shape, teachers began to be more open about sharing aspects of their practice and were involved in conversations about teaching and learning.

The focus was clearly on improving outcomes for Māori students and on problem solving, not laying blame. Throughout the year, these action research groups attracted other teachers who weren't initially part of the Te Kauhua project and the groups began to share not only with each other but also with the whole staff. The small action research groups had evolved into professional learning communities, which began to set a different tone for discussions about students and teaching and learning throughout the school. These groups were autonomous and met regularly. The range of foci covered by these groups was:

- Use of Te Reo & Tikanga Māori
- Co-operative learning strategies
- Feedback and feed forward techniques
- Non confrontational responses
- Questioning techniques
- Thinking skills and strategies
- Authentic learning contexts
- Leadership skills
- Transitioning for year 7 incoming and year 8 outgoing.
- Making links with technology.

The advantages of the groups were that they were a mix of teacher experience, strength and personalities. The precepts of shared leadership, expectations that teachers were to read and share professional knowledge and the valuing of diversity within the group provided a sound theoretical base for the development of professional learning communities that place people at the centre of educational change (Mitchell 1999).

The above summary has been drawn from my research diary and the assumptions that I make are from the position of a senior leader within the school in my work appraising and supporting teachers in their practice as well as focusing specifically on the development of collaborative school

culture. My overview then can be relied upon as I was immersed in the professional life of the school both as a leader and a participant, but it also could be viewed as being biased towards searching out the indicators of collaborative and professional learning against what was really happening for teachers. It is my belief that the emerging themes in the teacher interviews verify what I have been saying. Out of the themes that emerged from the interviews with the teachers, valuing time for discussion and reflection with other teachers emerged as the second highest.

I think what has been happening in other classes has been fantastic! Like (teacher) I can see that what you are doing in your class means that the students have a huge amount of respect for you.

(Female Teacher)

Te Kauhua has been really good just from a thinking aspect...thinking about how I can build a rapport with my Māori students and their families and then talking about it with other teachers. I think all of us are thinking “what can I take from this year into the next year...how can I change things around a bit?”

(Female Teacher)

The next two comments refer specifically to the importance that teachers attach to having time to share with each other and identify that it is in these times there is a reciprocal sharing of strategies and ideas.

It is really great just hearing some of these ideas here in this forum. But the most important aspect ...and one, which I didn't think I would enjoy, is actually having to report back to another group. This is such a good way of getting ideas about what you are doing and just seeing what other people do. I mean, next year I will probably start Te reo earlier because it has worked so well for (teacher).

(Male Teacher)

I keep focusing on the things that have worked well this year for my Māori students, like keeping them active, or allowing them some choice in where they sit and who they sit with...but then those things work for all kids.

(Female Teacher)

### **8. Students feel shy and or embarrassed about sharing their ideas in front of the whole class.**

Teacher at the front of the class style of teaching was not the preferred way of learning for the students I interviewed. One of the students said that she enjoyed learning in whole class discussions but she only listened, she didn't want to take part. When asked why she didn't take part she laughed and said:

Cos there are always other people who will answer the questions or say what they think...I don't answer when the whole class is listening, cos if you had a wrong answer they'd all laugh and stuff.

(Female Student)

It's embarrassing because sometimes the teacher puts you on the spot.

(Male Student)

Another student talked about how she disliked having to do speeches (which are a compulsory part of the written and oral language programme each year).

Oh yeah, speeches... I hate them. I can do it (write and deliver the speech) but I'm too shy. I can't talk like in front of heaps of people. I could do it in front of a small group of people that I know but not in front of heaps of people.

(Female Student)



These findings are comparable to those of Bishop et al, 2003 who discovered similar responses when constructing the original narratives of Māori students in the classroom. Students told of their whakamā (embarrassment) in having to interact with the teacher in a whole class setting. This lack of confidence or unwillingness to share ideas in the larger classroom group is also consistent with the findings of Fletcher; Parkhill; Taleni & Fa'afoi (2006) in their investigation into the barriers and supports affecting year seven & eight Pasifika students in reading and writing. The teacher at the front asking questions can exclude diverse students from participating and often to avoid this type of interaction students will move themselves to be outside of the gaze or view of the teacher. Unfortunately, this also keeps them out of interacting with the learning conversations that may occur between students and teachers. I have already discussed the findings about Māori students' preferences for learning in groups and this coupled with their dislike of interacting with the teacher in front of the whole class would indicate a need for more interactive teaching spaces and styles.

The role of teacher initiated questioning in classrooms needs to be addressed in relation to diverse students. This type of questioning can be an ineffective way of gaining responses from diverse students, not only in relation to its impositional position on the classroom question continuum (Young, 1991) but also in terms of efficacy in engaging students in deeper thinking or new learning. Pedagogical practices for diverse students need to address diversity (Alton-Lee, 2003) and there are very clear indicators from a myriad of studies requiring teachers to look at classroom practices that are inclusive and appropriate for diverse students (See, for example, Alton-Lee & Nuthall, 1998; Brophy, 2001; Clay, 1985; Dilworth & Brown, 2001; Freedman & Daiute, 2001; Higgins, 2001).

## **9. Student Frustration**

Students felt frustrated if they couldn't access the teacher when they needed their help. This may refer to the size of the class or the difficulty of the

learning. Students mentioned “waiting for their teacher” because he/she was helping someone else. The comment “have to go up to the front” to get some help or direction from the teacher was also common. The majority of these comments related to student learning in mathematics. No one would argue that classrooms of 30 plus students are busy places and that teaching a subject like mathematics in such classrooms is a demanding role and so this prompts educators to question the sense of this type of “traditional classroom”. From a teacher’s perspective, trying to meet the needs of every student in the classroom when the teacher is expected to be the giver of all knowledge to the students is almost an impossible job, one where you do the best you can against all odds. From a Māori cultural perspective there is a distinct power imbalance in that there is a distinct difference between the role of teacher and student, and this is manifested in the approach to teaching, the curriculum, and the way that the classroom is spatially organised.

One of the outcomes from Te Kauhua has been an awareness of ways to change teachers’ classroom practice with more emphasis on learning versus teaching. Developing more responsive teaching practices in classrooms (Biddulph & Osborne, 1984; Dalzell, 1986; Nuthall & Alton-Lee, 1993; Phillips, McNaughton & MacDonald, 2001) is one such approach that has been proven to be important for all learners and one way to move from a traditional teaching approach to a more co-constructed inquiry based approach (Alton-Lee, 2003). In simple terms responsive teaching practices means that teachers need to interact with their students on an individual basis and are willing to value the different approaches to learning that each child will present including cognitive, cultural, special needs and social differences. We do this well with our gifted and talented children but this focus on individual learning programmes needs to encompass the diversity of students who are present in all classes. It may seem like a lot of time invested in setting up individual learning programmes within the classroom but teacher and students will both reap the benefits of getting to know each other, valuing differences, ascertaining needs and guiding students on an inquiry of learning to create their own learning pathways. One obvious

example is to compare a mathematics lesson with the teacher teaching from the front of the class, where the teacher teaches to the whole class and the students listen, with the small group focus approach of the Numeracy Project, which allows students to work in smaller groups and discover their own solutions to problems in dialogue with the teacher and each other.

## **Unexpected findings**

### **Use of ICT combined with aspects of competitive learning**

Information and communication technology (ICT) is rapidly enhancing students engagement and necessitates learning and achievement in new literacies (Jukes & Dosaj, 2004; Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, & Cammack, 2004). Teachers are encouraged to explore ways that ICT can enhance the opportunities for learning (MOE, 2007). All of the classrooms in this school were equipped with data projectors and at least two computers for student use. In the interviews the use of computers or data projectors was mentioned on two occasions as being used in the lesson as a deliberate instructional strategy with the purpose of engaging particular students in order to move them along their learning pathway. The interesting aspect of this was that teachers combined the ICT aspect with competitive learning, which seemed to maximise the outcomes for students.

One my Māori boys in particular was really struggling to engage with his maths. He just was not interested...but as soon as I introduced the computer development challenge he loved it! He felt that he could push himself against one of his mates...and that was huge, and he actually started doing that himself, and saw that it was working...it just kept on encouraging him to do it more!

( Male Teacher)

Yeah, I tried using the data projector for two of my students who were reluctant readers. I used this thing that was part of a website while the others did their own reading. You have to try to work out the suffix and prefix and highlight the adjective. If I had given those two that work to do from a sheet on their own they would have needed me to keep them on task, but using this activity and making it into a competition the boys just got really involved. I will definitely do it again.

(Male Teacher)

Research indicates that competitive learning; where students compete to reach a goal or beat a standard is more effective than individualistic methods especially when combined with peer or group learning (Roseth, Fang, Johnson & Johnson, 2006). The teachers in this investigation have purposefully used ICT and competitive learning to help engage students in activities that they were previously not engaging in or achieving in.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Conclusion**

This investigation was carried out in an attempt to highlight the teaching practices and strategies that help engage Māori students in the mainstream

classroom. In utilising open-ended focus group interviews with the students, I wanted to hear from the students directly about what engaged them in learning. This was not about whether they liked a certain subject or not, it was about finding out what their teachers did or didn't do to help them learn and engage them in the curriculum of the classroom. I also used the interviews from the teachers to add another layer to the conversations of the students. This was particularly useful as there were obvious relationships between what the students said and what the teachers indicated was happening in their practice. The interviews were my main source of data but their importance and usefulness was due in part to the ongoing observations and reflections that I had been keeping in my research diary. When I had clarity in these observations and reflections I felt confident in interviewing the students and the teachers. My research diary plus the results from the teacher attitudinal survey provided a springboard from which to launch into my interviews.

## **Quality Relationships**

The results of this investigation clearly highlight the importance of quality relationships between students and teachers. The students in this investigation appreciated teachers' interest and care for them, both socially and academically. From the students' perspective, teachers are an important factor in their enjoyment of school and in helping them to learn. Building relationships with students implies respect by the teacher for what the child brings to the class from their home and culture. Teachers who have quality relationships with students have to develop skills such as listening, and caring to enable students to share their experiences and cultural knowledge (Hattie, 2009).

## **Teacher Accessibility**

Students prefer it when the teacher is able to give them guided instruction either one to one or in a small group. As in most classes there is only one

teacher, so this has obvious implications in terms of the composition of classes, both in regard to student needs and number and the current ratio of teachers to students in mainstream classrooms. Perhaps it is timely to look in depth at some of the more modern multipurpose classrooms that have been built with opportunity for open plan learning and shared teaching. Would the needs of diverse learners be better met in these learning contexts? It would certainly deal with the students' frustration of teacher positioning at the front of the class and enable a better balance of power in classrooms. The New Zealand Curriculum (MOE, 2007) highlights this type of teacher student interaction under the heading of "facilitating shared learning" (p. 34) which is widely accepted as effective pedagogy. Considering the importance of these indicators as well as the principles of Wānanga (learning forum which involves a dynamic sharing of knowledge) and Ako (reciprocity between teaching and learning) the issue of class size, classroom layout and ratio of teachers to student's needs careful consideration in future budgeting and planning, both from the schools perspective and the broader national perspective.

### **Working with a peer or in groups**

Students enjoy working with other students in pairs or in a small group. The students were very transparent in their responses when asked to clarify what they liked about working with a buddy. Quite simply it is always good to have someone to help you if you struggle and someone to use as a sounding board for your ideas. Both of these reasons are valid in any learning situation for lifelong learning. The New Zealand curriculum (MOE, 2007) endorses conversations between learners and reflective discourse as an important aspect of shared learning and there are many examples in the literature that supports working with a buddy or a peer (see, for example, Hamm & Fairclough, 2005; Nuthall, 2001; Roseth et al., 2006). This gives us a clear message about the importance of allowing students to talk and work with each other to construct learning. Closely aligned to this is the importance of providing learning contexts from an early age that will

involve students in practising and learning the skills associated with the key competencies (MOE, 2007, p12) particularly managing self, relating to others and participating and contributing.

## **Teacher Effort**

Students were aware of the ways that teachers helped them to learn and recognised that the teacher's efforts made a difference to their learning. This is probably the most understated comment in the investigation as in all instances of student learning the teacher's role and effort was mentioned. Literature tells us that it is what teachers know and do that makes the difference to student learning (Alton-Lee, 2003; Hattie, 2003) and confirmation of this resounds through and within this investigation. The implementation of a sound professional development framework such as Te Kauhua has deepened teacher knowledge of pedagogy and supported teachers in applying this new found knowledge into their classroom contexts. The realisation of the implications of deficit thinking for all groups of diverse students cannot be understated here. It is through a concerted effort to find out more about their Māori students that teachers in this investigation began to make a real difference for their students and for themselves as practitioners.

## **Importance of professional learning communities**

Perhaps the most important part of this research for me personally was the growth and commitment that I saw from within the teachers as they focused on Māori student achievement. This was not a passing focus that was diluted in the busy nature of the school year but a determined focus on ensuring that they were involved in changing and improving their practice through reflective and iterative action research. The teachers all mentioned how important the collaborative nature of these groups had become in their own sense of professional and personal experience of school. It was almost as though a light switch had been turned on – they knew that reflective practice

and professional learning communities were deemed as important and they had some idea that they were happening out there somewhere, but these things meant time and that is a precious commodity in the world of teaching. However when they were directed towards a specific focus, given time to reflect and grouped together for professional conversations the realisation of how much they could gain from each other was all at once evident. Even more importantly, individual teachers felt that what they had to offer, no matter how small would be valued by someone else. Te Kauhua was the mechanism that provided the time (release time) and direction with a structured programme to get teachers involved in action research programmes. The changes that I have observed in the attitude and practice of teachers have been significant. Furthermore, there is a change in school wide culture as teachers start to truly collaborate for the good of Māori students. If this much change can happen from structured release time that involves teachers committing to professional learning conversations and action research then it is money well worth spending.

### **Action Research Within Practice**

This brings me to conclude that teachers need to be involved in deep thinking and action research from day one of their practice. This keeps the passion for teaching and learning alive. Interestingly, we expect it of our students and we accept that they should become life long learners but we have no time put aside in the profession of teaching to regularly to keep uncovering things for ourselves. I observed a graduate student teacher present her action research at the our local university's college of education in semester one of 2009. This student had been on professional practice at the school where the investigation took place and was encouraged by something she had seen happening for students in the classroom. This was the catalyst for her presentation and it was an impressive mix of investigation, theory applied to practice and next steps for her own classroom practice. If graduate students are taking part in this type of research at university and gaining such useful insights into their practice



why are we not allowing time and guidance for this to continue as they commence their teaching careers? I applaud the university for engaging graduate student teachers in such useful inquiry learning. (I am not sure that this is happening for the other degree courses) and it should set a pathway for ongoing learning for all teachers no matter where they are in their careers. The New Zealand curriculum, (MOE, 2007) refers to “Teaching as Inquiry” as the “process that goes on moment by moment (as teaching takes place) day by day and over the longer term” (MOE, 2007, p.35). If this is a national expectation then it should be something that is happening at all levels of teaching practice. What is needed are the support mechanisms i.e.; mentors, lead learners, time, training and funding to situate action research in the learning culture of schools.

### **Finally...**

I set out to find out what it is that teachers do to maximise Māori students achievement in the classroom. Some of what I have discovered has been more of an affirmation rather than a discovery. Teachers at this school are successfully using practices and strategies that are in line with current pedagogical practices outlined in the New Zealand curriculum (MOE, 2007). Teachers are facilitating shared learning experiences by encouraging learning conversations and partnerships, making connections to prior learning by acknowledging the knowledge and the culture that Māori students bring with them into the classroom and using inquiry to focus on Māori student engagement and the impact of their teaching on their students. All of these things are demonstrable aspects of practice that work to improve outcomes for all students. The importance of quality relationships between teachers and students which emerged in this investigation will help to provide the supportive, creative and learning environment for these practices to flourish.

What I have uncovered for myself in this investigation is the importance of teacher quality as opposed to quality teaching. In all of strategies that work

for Māori students it is not the teaching or the quality of the teaching that has been identified as making the difference but the teacher and the qualities that they bring into the learning situation. Therefore in our schools and we need to be employing teachers with the right qualities, those teachers who really do care about students as individuals above all else, who look to themselves to solve the problems instead of laying blame and who acknowledge that the role of a teacher is by design, also the role of a learner. In our pre-service teacher education programmes we need to be evaluating student teachers' suitability for the role of teacher in a collaborative manner throughout their training. If, as the research suggests, that teachers are among the most powerful influences in learning then we need to ensure that student teachers understand and are willing and able to take on the enormity of the task.

Teachers need to be directive, influential, caring, and actively engaged in the passion of teaching and learning. Teachers need to be aware of what each and every student is thinking and knowing, to construct meaning and meaningful experiences in the light of this knowledge, and have proficient knowledge and understanding of their content to provide meaningful and appropriate feedback such that each student moves progressively through the curriculum levels.

(Hattie, 2009, p.238)

## Appendix 1

### Teacher Attitudinal Change Report

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Section

*Please indicate your perception of the involvement the parents/whanau have in the interactions between yourself as the teacher and parents/whanau of your students which is directly related to the learning experience by circling the appropriate number on the following scales:*

1. In terms of working together (with parents/whanau) towards improving successful outcomes for Maori learners by involving parents/whanau in the decision making regarding curriculum:

I do not include whanau in the planning, co-construction of the units to be taught	I am beginning to look at ways in which I can involve parents/whanau in planning, co-construction of the units	I have trialled and continue to trial ways in which I can include parents/whanau in the planning, co-construction of the units	I regularly meet with students/parents and together along with the students we co-construct elements of the curriculum, or units of work
1	2	3	4

If you circled 2, 3, 4 please give an example of how you did this

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2. My expectations of Maori parents/whanau in terms of being able to contribute to the planning, organising and co-construction of this knowledge is:

Very low: I do not think Maori parents/whanau can contribute in these areas	Low: I think that possibly some Maori parents will be able to contribute to the planning and organising	High: I expect given the opportunity some Maori parents can contribute to the planning, organising and co-construction of this knowledge	Very high: Given the opportunity I believe that all parents/whanau can significantly contribute to the planning, co construction of units
1	2	3	4

*Teacher Attitudinal Change Doc – Whanau & School Partnerships for Learning Facilitator – Benita Tahuri  
Derived from Teacher Attitudinal Change Doc by Ruth Gorinski*

3. What is your view on the following statement: Maori parents/whanau have a place in the professional learning of teachers.

Strongly disagree	disagree	Unsure but open to explore this	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

Comments

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4. My expectations of Maori parents and whanau are:

Very low	low	No expectations	High	Very high
1	2	3	4	5

5. In terms of my work in this project around engaging and developing productive partnerships with Maori parents/whanau I feel:

Very uneasy	uneasy	confident	Confident and keen
1	2	3	4

Please provide comment in order for us to progress this aspect of Te Kauhua

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## Section B

Please provide an indication of changes (if any) on your practice as a result of working with Maori parents/whanau for improved learning outcomes for Maori students. Write brief notes in the relevant boxes.

Demonstrable changes in teacher practice	
Have you engaged in general interactions with parents/whānau on the learning of Maori students?	<p>Yes No</p> <p>If yes please describe this interaction...</p>
Nature of planning – have you had the opportunity as a result of interactions with Maori parents/whanau included whanau voice/input, desired outcomes in your planning?	<p>Yes No</p> <p>If yes please give an example</p>
Have you as a result of this inclusion, modified, changed added to or re-written aspects of your planning?	<p>Yes No</p> <p>If yes please give an example</p>

Teacher Attitudinal Change Doc – Whanau & School Partnerships for Learning Facilitator – Benita Tahuri  
Derived from Teacher Attitudinal Change Doc by Ruth Gorinski



## Appendix 2

### Me and My School

#### About Me

Gender: Boy ☐ Girl ☐

Year level: Year 4 ☐ Year 5 ☐ Year 6 ☐

Were you at this school at the start of the year? Yes ☐ No ☐

Ethnic group: European ☐ Māori ☐ Pacific ☐ Asian ☐ Other ☐

#### Instructions

Over the page there are 28 sentences about school and learning. You have to shade a circle to show how much you agree (or disagree) with each sentence. The circles mean: "strongly disagree", "disagree", "agree", and "strongly agree". Here are two examples to show you what to do.

**E1** I like my school.

Strongly disagree ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐ Strongly agree

In E1 the person **agrees** that they like school, but they don't like school enough to shade strongly agree.

**E2** I often get to school late.

Strongly disagree ☐ ☒ ☐ ☐ Strongly agree

In E2 the person **disagrees** that they often get to school late, but not enough to shade strongly disagree.

It is best to use a pen to shade in the circles. If you want to change your answer, put a cross through the circle you want to change ☒ and fill in another circle. Please answer all the questions. If you are not sure which circle to shade in, choose the one closest to how you feel.

#### Confidentiality

This is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers. You do not need to write your name on this form, and no one else will be able to know which circles you shaded.

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## Me and My School

<b>1</b> Most mornings I feel happy about going to school.	Strongly disagree <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Strongly agree	<b>8</b> People care about each other in this school.	Strongly disagree <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Strongly agree
<b>2</b> I am proud to be at this school.	Strongly disagree <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Strongly agree	<b>9</b> I listen in class.	Strongly disagree <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Strongly agree
<b>3</b> Most of the time being at school puts me in a good mood.	Strongly disagree <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Strongly agree	<b>10</b> I like my teachers.	Strongly disagree <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Strongly agree
<b>4</b> I think it is important for me to behave well at school.	Strongly disagree <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Strongly agree	<b>11</b> I am comfortable talking to my teachers about problems.	Strongly disagree <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Strongly agree
<b>5</b> I often feel bored at school.	Strongly disagree <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Strongly agree	<b>12</b> I care a lot about what my teachers think of me.	Strongly disagree <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Strongly agree
<b>6</b> I respect other students.	Strongly disagree <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Strongly agree	<b>13</b> Most of my teachers like me.	Strongly disagree <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Strongly agree
<b>7</b> I feel safe at school.	Strongly disagree <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Strongly agree	<b>14</b> I feel my teachers help me learn.	Strongly disagree <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Strongly agree

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## Me and My School

<b>15</b> It is easy to talk about my schoolwork with most of my teachers.	Strongly disagree <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Strongly agree	<b>22</b> I find it easy to concentrate on what I am doing in class.	Strongly disagree <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Strongly agree
<b>16</b> I add my ideas when the class is having a discussion.	Strongly disagree <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Strongly agree	<b>23</b> I take notice of what my teachers say about my work.	Strongly disagree <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Strongly agree
<b>17</b> I think school is important.	Strongly disagree <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Strongly agree	<b>24</b> At school I really care that I do my best work.	Strongly disagree <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Strongly agree
<b>18</b> I do as little work as possible.	Strongly disagree <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Strongly agree	<b>25</b> I feel like I am making progress at school.	Strongly disagree <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Strongly agree
<b>19</b> I am interested in what I am learning in class.	Strongly disagree <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Strongly agree	<b>26</b> Sometimes I get to class late on purpose.	Strongly disagree <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Strongly agree
<b>20</b> When schoolwork is hard I stop trying.	Strongly disagree <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Strongly agree	<b>27</b> My family/caregivers are interested in what I do at school.	Strongly disagree <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Strongly agree
<b>21</b> I like learning new things at school.	Strongly disagree <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Strongly agree	<b>28</b> I like to tell other people what I am doing at school.	Strongly disagree <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Strongly agree

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